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Edw. A. Loring,

AN INQUIRY:

Respect of Persons.

ARE THE WICKED IMMORTAL?

IN

SIX SERMONS.

ALSO,

HAVE THE DEAD KNOWLEDGE?

BY

GEORGE STORRS.

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.

1847.

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BIBLE EXAMINER.

AN INQUIRY : ARE THE WICKED IMMORTAL ?

By George Storrs.

FIRST DISCOURSE.

* May we know what this new doctrine whereof thou speakest is ? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears : we would know, therefore, what these things mean." Acts xvii. 19, 20.

PAUL, in preaching the gospel, came to Athens ; he there beheld an altar inscribed "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." At the idolatry he saw, his spirit was stirred within him ; hence he disputed daily with them that met him. He encountered certain philosophers—wise men, no doubt,—at least in their own estimation—and some of them said : What will this babbler say ? Others said, he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange Gods. No doubt they thought he was a "heretic" of the blackest stamp ; yet they seemed disposed to hear him, before they passed final sentence upon him. In this respect they certainly manifested a better disposition than many of the present day, who are so wise in their own estimation, that no one can advance a thought to which they will listen, unless it has first passed through the head of some *doctor of divinity*. Not so with the men of Athens ; "strange" as the things were that the Apostle taught, they were desirous to know what the *new* doctrine was.

Various errors exist among men in regard to revealed truth. These errors go to show how imperfect we are in knowledge—the mistakes committed in our education—the reluctance of the mind to investigate—and a want of moral

courage to step aside from the track marked out by learned men, as they are thought to be, but who, most likely, have conducted their own investigations under the influence of the fear of being denounced as heretics, if they should be led to results unlike to those who are reputed for wisdom. But "if any man will be wise, let him become a fool that he may be wise," is the language of inspiration itself.

We honour God only so far as we have right conceptions of his character, government and purposes, and act in accordance with them. If we believe God will reward, or *punish* men contrary to his own word, we dishonour him, however much sincerity we may possess. Truth and the honour of God are inseparable : and we cannot glorify our Heavenly Father by erroneous opinions. Yet, most professed christians, if pressed on the subject, can give little better reason for what they believe, on many points, than that their *teachers* told them so.

It is a solemn duty to study our Bibles, and form our opinions of what they teach for ourselves, as we must answer *for ourselves*. But in this study the adoption of correct principles of interpretation is of the first importance. Without this, our appeal to the word of God may only serve to confirm us in error.

The plainest truths of the Bible have been wrapped in darkness by pretending that the language of the Scriptures has a mystical or *secret meaning* that does not appear in the words employed. Such a principle of interpretation is a libel on the Bible. That book professes to be a *revelation* ; and so plain, too, that the wayfaring man can understand it ; and the Saviour says, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." The language of the Bible, then, should be explained as the language of any other book, i. e. according to its *plain* and obvious meaning : unless there is a clear necessity for departing from it. With these remarks I proceed to

THE QUESTION AT ISSUE, OR POINT IN DEBATE.

The question is not, whether the soul *can* be immortal, nor whether the souls of the righteous *will* be immortal ; but — Will the wicked who live and die in their sins, con-

tinue eternally, or *without end*, in a state of *conscious being*? Or, once more—Is the punishment God has threatened to sinners an *eternal state of conscious being in misery*? This involves the question of the immortality of the soul. For if all men can be proved to be immortal, I conceive it clearly follows from the Bible, that the finally impenitent will be punished with eternal conscious being in misery.

THE ARGUMENTS IN PROOF OF MAN'S IMMORTALITY.

These are mainly three, viz. : First—The desire all men feel for it. Second—That the soul is *spiritual*, hence *indestructible*, and *therefore immortal*. Third—That God *wills* it to be immortal.

To these, perhaps, another should be added, viz. : “All nations and people have believed the soul immortal.” To this last argument, I answer—There is no evidence that all nations and people have believed it. There is evidence to the contrary. In the “Dialogue on the immortality of the soul”—found in “PLATO'S DIALOGUES”—Socrates, having spoken of the nature of the soul, says—“Shall a soul of this nature, and created with all these advantages, be dissipated and annihilated as soon as it parts from the body, as *most men believe*?” Here the fact is brought out, that so far from its being a general belief that the soul is immortal, the exact reverse was true in Socrates' day.

So far from all nations and people believing the soul immortal, there were a large class among the Jews who did not believe it, viz. : the Sadducees, who said, “There is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit.”—Hence, there is no truth in the argument, that all nations and people have believed in the immortality of the soul.

I proceed now to take up the three main arguments in support of the immortality of the soul.

1. *The desire all men feel for it.* This argument can avail nothing, unless it can be proved, that what men desire they will possess. But men desire many things, they never do and never can obtain. All men desire happiness ; but does it, therefore, follow, that all men will be happy ! Certainly not. So, neither does it follow, because all men desire immortality, that therefore, they are immortal : that desire

is, without doubt, a strong principle implanted in us by the author of our being, to excite us to a course of living that shall secure that invaluable blessing, which he designed to bestow upon man, if he would walk in obedience to the law of his God. Hence, the dread of the loss of it was to influence men in enduring whatever of trial might be their lot, during their sojourn in this state of probation ; and, properly considered, will be a mighty stimulus to enable us to suffer even unto death, if need be, that we may save our lives unto ETERNAL LIFE.

2. It is said—*The soul is spiritual, hence indestructible, and therefore immortal.* One single consideration is sufficient to overthrow this argument, and show that it has no force. He who created can destroy. Our Saviour saith, "Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

But the objector says, "Nothing can be destroyed—not even a grain of sand." If all the objector means is, *man* cannot destroy any thing, I admit it ; but if he means to prove any thing by this objection, he intends to be understood as saying, *God* cannot destroy any thing. Such an argument might pass in the mouth of a professed atheist ; but for a professed believer in the *being* and *power* of Jehovah to use it, is shocking ; unless he can prove that God has said, that nothing He has created shall be destroyed.

Because man cannot destroy "a grain of sand," does it therefore follow that God cannot do it, if He will ? If it is true, that because man cannot destroy a grain of sand, God cannot do it — it is equally true that, because man cannot create a grain of sand, God cannot do it ; and thus we should be driven into the theory, that all things which we consider created, are, in fact, eternal, and never had a beginning. If the objector is not willing to take this position, let him admit that God can, if he will, destroy, or cause to cease to have existence "the souls" He has "made."

Having examined the first two arguments in favour of the immortality of the souls of all men, and shown, as I think, that they have no foundation in truth, the ground of the argument is narrowed to this one point, viz. :—

3. *Is it the will of God that wicked men shall be immortal?*

In determining this question, I shall call no man master or father that now lives or ever did live. It will weigh not a straw in my mind, what any of the (so called) "fathers," have said or written; but what saith the testimony of God? "To the law and to the testimony; if any man speak not according to these, it is because there is no light in him."

To commence, I call attention to what man lost by the fall. In order to understand this, let us look at man prior to the fall. He was a probationer. For what? Not for happiness—for he had that in possession. Not for life, merely, as he was in the enjoyment of that also. I conclude it was for *eternal life*—figured and set forth before his eyes by the "tree of life"—as *death*, the opposite, was set forth by the "tree of knowledge of good and evil." Each of those trees, I conclude, were signs; the one of *Life*, the other of *Death*—not of man's body merely, but of the *whole* man; or, in other words, "Life and Death" were "set before" him. Eternal life must depend upon the absence of evil; if evil is introduced, death must follow. Man had before him a standing call and warning—a call to obedience and Life; a warning against disobedience, or sin and Death. He disregarded the warning, and slighted the call—he sinned. Now, "The Lord said, lest he (man) put forth his hand, and take of the tree of life, and eat, and LIVE FOR EVER, he (God) drove out the man, and he placed a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." That is, as clear as language can express it, the Lord God determined, or willed, that man should not be immortal in his sin; or, in other words, in the day man sinned he lost all *title* to immortality, and was cut off from the "tree of life;" or, the sign God had given of eternal life, was "hid from" his "eyes."

That this loss relates to the whole man, and not to the body merely, as some suppose, I prove from the fact, that if it related to the body only, there is not a particle of evidence in the transaction, of pronouncing sentence upon man, by his Maker, that any penalty was threatened to the soul, or inflicted upon it. There is surely none in the con-

text ; and it appears to me, that if the exclusion from the tree of life, lest man should eat and live for ever, does not relate to the whole man, there is no evidence there that the denunciation of God against man affected anything but man's body. God could have constituted man immortal in his sin and misery ; but it appears it was his pleasure that he should not be ; and this *will* of God is expressed in the text under consideration.

Again—That this loss related to the whole man, I prove from the fact, that our Saviour, in his address to one of the seven churches of Asia, says, “To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” How clear the reference, and how obvious, that it is the whole man that is spoken of ; and that none are to have access to that tree, or have immortality, but such as overcome !

But I wish to call attention further to the tree of life, to show that it related to something more than the body. Revelation, 22d chapter and 2d verse, we read thus ;—“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life,” &c. ; and at the 14th verse—“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” The reference here is too clear to be misunderstood ; no one will pretend that this relates to the body merely. By what authority, then, do they assume it, in regard to the “tree of life” in Paradise ?

Allow me here to introduce an extract or two from Richard Watson. His “Institutes” are well known among many in this country, as well as in Europe. In his sermon on “Paradise shut and re-opened,” he has this remark—“The tree of life was a kind of sacrament. As the promise of immortality was given to Adam, every time he ate of this tree by God's appointment, he expressed his faith in God's promise ; and God, as often as he ate of it, sealed the promise of immortality to man. In this view, sin excluded man from the tree of life, as he lost his title to immortality.” Again, Mr. Watson says, in his sermon on “The tree of life,”—“It has been suggested that it was the natural means appointed to counteract disease by med-

ical virtue ; and thus to prevent bodily decay and death. This," he says, "is not an improbable hypothesis ; but we have no authority for it ; and if we had, our inquiries would not be at an end. For this hypothesis relates only to the body ; whereas we find the tree of life spoken of in connexion with the life of the soul—not only with immortality on earth, but with immortality in heaven."

"It is not, therefore, without reason," he continues, "that many eminent divines have considered this tree as a constant pledge to Adam of a higher life ; and since there was a covenant of works, the tenor of which was, 'this do, and thou shalt live,'—and as we know God has ever connected signs, seals, and sacraments with his covenants—analogy may lead us to conclude that this tree was the matter of sacrament—the eating of it a religious act ; and that it was called 'the tree of life,' because it was not only a means of sustaining the immortality of the body, but the pledge of spiritual life here, and of a higher and more glorious life in a future state, to which man might pass, not, indeed, by death, but by translation."

"This will explain," continues Mr. Watson, "the reason why the fruit of that tree was prohibited after man had sinned. He had broken the covenant, and had no right now to eat of the sign, the sacrament, the pledge of immortality. 'Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever : therefore, the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden. God resumed his promises, withdrew the sign of them, and now refused any token or assurance of his favour.'"

Mr. Watson adds, "The Judge passes sentence, but the Judge also gives a promise ; and man is bidden to hope in another object, 'the seed of the woman.' That seed was henceforth to be his *tree of life*."

Thus much for Mr. Watson. He did not hold the doctrine for which I contend, in regard to the final destiny of the wicked ; still, there are passages in his works which look strongly that way.

I conceive that Adam's posterity in his loins when he sinned, would never have come into conscious being, had it not been for the promised "seed of the woman." Man,

after his apostacy, was without hope ; and being in despair, his situation must have been such as to cut off all pleasure or enjoyment, and so render him as incapable of propagating his species as the devils, till such time as his Maker gave him the cheering hope of a *deliverer*.

Adam himself came short of immortality, and would, ultimately, have utterly perished, or ceased to be, had it not been for the "seed of the woman." This truth, then, comes full into view, *that there is no immortality in sin*. Or, in other words, God has willed that the wicked shall not have immortality. Adam being cut off from immortality could not possibly communicate it to his posterity : this invaluable blessing therefore was ever after to be had "only" in Christ ; for God has given unto us ETERNAL LIFE, and this life is in his Son ; so that "He that hath the Son, hath *life*," whilst "he that hath not the Son of God hath *not life*."

FACTS FROM GOD'S WORD FOR CONSIDERATION.

Before I proceed further, I wish to call attention to a few facts from the Scriptures of divine truth.

The word "*Eternal*" occurs but twice in the Old Testament. Once in Deut. 33 : 27, and is applied to God—"The *eternal* God is thy refuge,"—and once in Isa. 60 : 15, and is spoken of the people of God—"I will make thee an *eternal* excellency."

The phrase "*Eternity*" occurs but once in the Bible, viz., Isa. 57 : 15, and is applied to God—"Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth *eternity*."

How common to hear men talk about *eternity*—and to hear ministers tell their hearers they are going into eternity—and urge that consideration upon them, to call up attention. "Prepare for eternity," say they. To my mind, it is evident, *that* consideration is not made use of, in the Scriptures, to lead men to God. Jesus Christ, nor his apostles ever used it. They preached that men were perishing—dying—exposed to death—in danger of losing everlasting life—travelling in the way that leadeth to destruction, &c.: exhorted them to repent—believe—to lead a new life—to save themselves from this untoward generation—to lay

hold on eternal life, &c.—but never told their hearers—“You are hastening to eternity ;” for, I repeat it, that is not true, in fact. When men die, they go into the invisible state, and are reserved until the judgment.

The phrase “eternal life,” occurs no where in the Bible, except in the New Testament, and is always spoken of the righteous ; it never has connected with it any qualifying terms, such as “happy,” “blessed,” or “miserable,” &c., but simply denotes life in opposition to the death of the wicked. See Romans 6 : 21–23. “What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed ? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life ; for the wages of sin is death : but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Here life and death are put in opposition, and no intimation is given that the death of the wicked is eternal conscious being in torments.

It is very common to hear people talk about a happy eternal life—a blessed eternal life—a glorious eternal life ; as though the language of the Bible were not explicit enough. Such additions to the word of God, give evidence, if we had no other, that there is something defective in their theory. Such additions ought always to be looked upon with suspicion ; and, if received at all, be received with great caution.

In interpreting the Scriptures, if we would be saved from the wild fields of conjecture, and save ourselves from an entire dependence upon others for the knowledge of what the Bible teaches, we must have some settled principles of interpretation. The following I consider the most important ; first—That words are to have their primary, and obvious meaning, unless there is a clear necessity of departing from it. By their primary and obvious meaning, I mean, the plain, and direct sense of the words, such as they may be supposed to have in the mouths of the speakers, who used them according to the language of that time and country in which they lived, without any of those learned, artificial, and forced senses, which are put on them by those who claim the right to be the “authorized expounders of the Bible.”

Such forced sense is, usually, nothing more than the peculiar notions that they have been bred up in, and may have no better foundation than the superstition of some good old ancestor.

The next principle of interpretation I would lay down is, That it is a truth, from which we are not to depart without the clearest evidence, that words are never used to mean more than their primary signification ; though they may be, and often are, used to signify something less. Not to adhere to this principle is to make revelation *no revelation*. Those who abandon this principle may as well admit, at once, that the common people ought not to have the Bible, for it will only lead them astray.

The primary meaning of the term *death* is, "the extinction of life." To say, then, that when God threatens men with death, he does not mean they shall die, but be kept alive in eternal torments, it seems to me is not warranted by any ordinary use of language.

What should we think of a law that says, "For murder thou shalt die," if we were told the meaning is not, that the transgressor shall actually die, but be kept alive in undescribable torments, protracted to the greatest possible extent? Would any man think he was fairly dealt with by such an administration? And would he not have just cause of complaint at the want of definiteness in the terms used to denote the punishment threatened!

The term *Immortal* occurs but *once* in the Bible, viz.: 1 Timothy 1: 17; and is applied to God. "The king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God."

If we were to judge by the frequency that we hear the phrase "immortal soul," we should suppose it was the most common expression in the Scriptures. You will hardly hear a sermon without the preacher often telling, with great emphasis, about "the immortal soul," as though he thought that qualifying term was all important to impress his hearers with a sense of the soul's value : not content, with the Saviour, to ask—"What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" No, that would be quite too weak, in his estimation, and he must strengthen it by adding, "immortal." To show the absurdity of such

a course, I have only to say—That which is immortal, cannot be lost. Hence, the persons who use this qualifying term, have to add another, and say—lose all “happiness.” Now, the loss of the soul, and the loss of happiness, are two very different things, and each capable of being expressed in appropriate language. To say, then, that when our Saviour said, a man may “lose his own soul,” he did not mean that he will come short of immortality, perish, or cease all sense and life, but only that he shall lose the happiness of his soul, is, in my mind, making sad havoc of the word of God.

As in sermons, so it is in prayers. Men seem to think prayers have but little power, unless they spice them often with, “immortal soul :” and they would probably stare at you, as though they thought you an infidel, if you were to tell them that the Bible no where calls the soul immortal.

How often, too, do we hear the phrase “deathless spirit,” in direct contradiction of the testimony of God, which expressly declares, “the soul that sinneth, IT SHALL DIE.”

A hymn, often sung, begins as follows :—

“ A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A *never dying soul* to save
And fit it for the sky.”

The same hymn ends thus :—

Help me to watch and pray,
And on thyself rely,
Assured if I my trust betray,
I shall *forever die*.”

How a never dying soul can forever die, it will take at least a poet to tell ; or a very learned divine. Common people are not skilled in such palpable contradictions.

The term “*immortality*,” occurs only five times in the Bible, and is never spoken of the wicked ; but is brought to view as something to be sought after, and to be found alone in Christ. “To them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for honour, glory, immortality,—eternal life,” Rom. 2 : 7. Why, I pray, are men to seek for it, if it is the inheritance of all ? It is easy to say, as some do,

that it is a "blessed" immortality we are to seek for : but that is an "adding" to God's word, as I think, that is unwarranted by any other portion of that blessed volume.

"*Mortality*" occurs but once in the Bible ; 2 Cor. 5 : 4 ; and is an earnest desire of the righteous to have it "swallowed up of life." Paul, in Rom. 8 : 10, says, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead" (i. e. mortal, doomed to die,) "because of sin ; but the spirit is life" (why ? because the souls of men are immortal ? No ; but) "because of righteousness ;" clearly implying that it is the righteousness, or having Christ in them, that makes their spirits immortal. This is further evident from the next verse, where he assures them that their "mortal bodies" should be quickened," i. e. be made immortal by the spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead.

That the meaning of the term "quickened," in this text, is to be made immortal, will appear, if we consider, that if it signifies no more than the raising of the body from the dead, this will be done whether "the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in" them or not ; for "there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust." The difference is, the righteous rise to immortality, as Paul saith in 1 Cor. 15th chapter : but the wicked rise to be judged and condemned to the second death. And as by the first death they cease to be on earth ; so by the second death they cease to be in the Universe of God ; or are "destroyed forever."

Man is said to be "corruptible," in opposition to the "incorruptible God." See Rom. 1 : 23. Again ; "They that sow to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption," not immortality. See Gal. 6 : 8. The wicked shall "utterly perish in their own corruption." 2 Peter 2 : 12.

REMARKS.

If the view I take of this subject be correct, then many portions of Scripture, which have been obscure on the common theory, become clear, beautiful, and full of meaning and force. If men are really dying, according to the strict and literal meaning of that term, soul as well as body, or the whole man, then the language in which they are ad-

dressed is strictly calculated to awaken attention, and move their hearts. For example : “In him was life ; and the life was the light of men.” Again : Men are represented as sitting “in darkness, and in the shadow of death ;” i. e. death is so near them that his dark shadow is over them ; but Christ is “the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world ;” thus showing them how to escape death. Again : “The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world—I am the bread of life. This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and NOT DIE.”

How natural and forcible these and similar texts are, on the supposition that man is actually dying . It takes not a scholar, or doctor of divinity, to see how appropriate the remedy to the disease. Men by sin have been cut off from the tree of life—they were starving, dying. Christ comes : the bread of life—the feast is spread ;—hungry, dying souls are invited, without money and without price. Come, eat and LIVE. If you stay away, you DIE. O, come to Christ and live—yea, live for ever, and *not die*. Amen.

SECOND DISCOURSE.

“Ye shall not surely die.” Gen. iii, 4.

Our Saviour saith—“the devil is a liar and the father of it.” He commenced his attack on our race by telling our first parents they should “not surely die,” if they did disobey God. He was too successful in that game to have forgotten the lucky card ; he has played it round, in some form, on men, ever since he first swept Paradise with it. He told Eve, in her innocency, while holy, and in love with her Maker, that the God of love could not give place to such feelings as to cut them off from life if they did do what he had forbidden. He was successful, and he has never forgotten his success. True, he has turned his card since, but it is the same card still. It has still inscribed on it—“Ye shall not SURELY DIE.” Now he makes use

of it, as I think, to insinuate that God does not love or pity man, seeing he has determined that man shall *not* DIE, but be kept alive in eternal consciousness, in undescribable torments, for his sins.

As the doctrine, "Ye shall not surely die," had its origin with the old serpent, I cannot divest myself of the conviction that the notion that wicked men will be kept eternally alive in torments, and never die, had its origin from the same source, as it appears to be a perfect fac-simile; and that it was invented to inspire hard thoughts of God, and keep men from turning to Him by repentance and faith, or confidence, and acknowledging their sins against the God of love. And I solemnly believe, this doctrine has kept more souls away from God, and driven them to the disbelief of all future punishment, or into infidelity, than any other doctrine that was ever promulgated. I am solemnly convinced that it has done more to destroy souls than all other errors put together.

Multitudes, without any proper reflection upon the claims of God's law, have rejected all future punishment, because of the nature of that which the "orthodox," as they are called, say is to be inflicted; whilst others have lived and died in real infidelity, or what has been called so, because they could not believe that a Being whose word declares that he "is love," could inflict such punishment on even the worst and most bitter of his enemies.

I shall attempt to show you that the death which is the wages of sin is not immortality in misery, but an actual *extermination of being*. I say, then, in opposition to the old serpent, if men do not come to Christ, that they may have life, they *SHALL* surely die—past hope, past recovery.

Let me here briefly call attention to the question at issue. It is not whether men *can* be immortal, nor whether the righteous will be immortal, but will the conscious being of the wicked be eternal? or is the punishment of the wicked interminable being in misery? or destruction of being?

I use the term immortal, in these discourses, in its commonly received meaning; i. e. according to Grimshaw, "exempt from death;" and according to Walker, "never to die—never ending, perpetual."

In my first discourse, I had brought the subject down to the inquiry,

WHAT ARE THE TERMS EMPLOYED TO DENOTE THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED.

Are they such as can, by any fair construction of language, be made to mean that the wicked have eternal conscious being in misery? Let us keep in mind, that words are not to be so explained as to mean *more* than their primary signification, without an obvious necessity; though they may, and often do, signify less.

Previous to the examination of those terms which relate to the punishment of wicked men, I would say, they are not punished till after the judgment of the great day; but are reserved to that day *to be* punished. Thus "God spared not the angels that sinned, but delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." And "the Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment *to be* punished." 2 Peter 2: 4-9. And again, Job 21: 30. "The wicked is reserved unto the day of destruction." And Nahum 1: 2. "The Lord reserveth wrath for his enemies." Jude 6. "He hath reserved unto the judgment of the great day."

The terms employed are—*Perish—Utterly perish—Utterly consumed with terrors—Destroy—Destroyed—Destroyed for ever—Destruction—To be burned—Burned UP with unquenchable fire—Burn them up, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch—Perdition—Die—Death—Second death, &c.*

Let us now begin with the first of these terms, viz. :—"PERISH." Grimshaw, in his Etymology, says it signifies, "to cease to have existence—to die—to decay."

Which of these definitions is suited to convey the idea of eternal conscious being? Can that which is never to cease, be said *to be decaying*? Can that which has *interminable life* be said "to die?" Can that which is always to continue in being, be said "*to cease to have existence*?" I need not pursue that inquiry; it is a "self-evident truth," that however the term *perish* may be used, in an accommodated sense, to signify something less than an actual ceas-

ing to be, it is even then borrowed from its primary signification, and must be restored to it when there is not a known necessity for departing from it. In the case under consideration, there can be no such necessity, unless it can first be proved that the wicked are immortal.

Paul, in 1 Cor. 15 : 18, says—"Then," (if Christ be not raised,) "they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*." What! in eternal conscious being in hell torments! The supposition is so absurd that my opponents admit that the term *perish* here means "to cease to be." By what twist of language can they ever make it mean anything else, when spoken of the final state of the lost? Though the term is often used to denote something less than an actual ceasing to be, it does not therefore follow that it is used to mean something far greater and more horrible. To apply this term to an eternal state of conscious being in misery, is to force a sense upon it which is not warranted by God's word.

Let us keep constantly in mind that the whole family of man, by birth, have no access to the tree of life, consequently were perishing, were dead to immortality. Now look at the following texts :

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not *perish*, but have everlasting life." Here everlasting life is the opposite of perishing. I pray, is everlasting being in misery the opposite of everlasting life! The wicked, upon that view, have as really everlasting life as the righteous, though under different circumstances.

"For we," saith an apostle, "are unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that *perish*. To the one we are the savor of death unto death, and to the other of life unto life."

Here *perishing* and *life* are put in opposition, and the term *perish* is explained by the apostle himself, to mean *death*, and not life in misery.

I need not quote all the passages where this term is employed to express the final doom of the wicked, in which it is evident we are to receive it in its primary meaning, and no other. Before I leave this term, however, I must call

your attention to one fact, and that is—in the Acts of the Apostles, the very place where we should expect to find, if anywhere in the Bible, the doctrine of eternal conscious being in torments, because the apostles were addressing sinners, there is not a particle of evidence to support the common theory. On the contrary, the views I maintain are most clearly set forth by Paul, in the 13th chapter, in a discourse to the “blaspheming” Jews, telling them that they judged themselves “unworthy of everlasting life,” and adding—“Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and *perish*.” What an excellent occasion had the apostle to have aroused the Jews by the common theory, had he believed it !

Look at that chapter, and you will see, if there ever was a time in which the apostle was called to deal plainly, it was then. I ask if any preacher of our days, who believes in the immortality of the wicked, in preaching to such hardened sinners as the apostle addressed, contents himself with such language as the apostle here used ? No. They first describe the misery of the sinner in hell, and then, with the strongest figures they can produce, go on to give an idea of its duration, which, after all, they cannot find language to describe. The apostle did no such thing. There is not a particle of evidence of it in all his preaching and writings.

“DIE” and “DEATH.”

These terms primarily signify, “To perish—to come to nothing—the extinction of life.” Hence, when these terms are applied to the soul, in regard to the final result of a course of sin, we ought to have good evidence that they are *not* to be understood in their *primary* meaning, before we depart from that interpretation ; especially, before we fix upon them a sense so contrary to their proper signification as that of endless life, or being in torments.

The apostle, in Rom. 1 : 32, speaking of certain wicked characters, says—“Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they that commit such things are worthy of death,” &c. In the 2d chapter, 5th verse and onwards, he speaks “of the righteous judgment of God,” when “wrath” will be visited on the wicked ; and the death spoken of is ex-

pressly called "perish"-ing, as the result of the "indignation and wrath" with which the wicked will be visited "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." Death, then, as the apostle explains it, when applied to the punishment of the wicked at the judgment, is to "perish."

"The soul that sinneth it shall die," refers to its final doom. This will appear if we consider, men will die, *i. e.* leave this world, or state of being, whether they sin or not. Nor can it refer to a violent leaving this world, as some suppose; for all sinners do not die a violent death. I conclude, then, that it relates to the soul's final doom.

"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" evidently looks to the same result, the final destiny of the wicked. Life and death are put in opposition: not life and conscious being in misery, but simple life and death, without any qualifying terms to lead any one to suspect that they are to be understood any other way than in their most obvious meaning; and I cannot but think, if you were to put the Bible into the hands of a person who had never heard a word of explanation, he would so understand it.

Lest I should, in the present discourse, take up too much time in the examination of these terms, I will pass over the remainder of them till another time.

Having, as I think, established the point that the wicked are not immortal, I might leave it to the believer in the opposite theory to prove *his* position from the Bible, and pursue the subject no further. I shall not, however, shrink from meeting the supposed objections to my view.

OBJECTIONS EXAMINED.

The objections do not arise from any positive proof in the Bible that the wicked are immortal, but from circumstantial evidence, drawn from expressions used in reference to the punishment of the impenitent. The first objection I shall notice is founded on the case of the "rich man," who died and lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torments, &c.

By facts as well as parables the Bible communicates instruction. In order to a right understanding of the speaker or writer, we should first inquire what was the object in view, or the instruction intended to be imparted. This we can only learn from the text, context, or comparing it with other portions of revelation.

There appear to have been several points intended to be impressed upon the people, by our Saviour, in the text now under consideration ; and the instruction is the same whether it be considered a parable or history of facts. We will try to bring out some of the principal points that appear in this text—and

1. *It seems designed to show the folly and danger of trusting in RICHES.* The changeableness of the affairs of this life had been shown in the first part of this chapter ; they had also been cautioned to make a right use of the things of this world, and told that they could “not serve God and mammon.” The Pharisees, who were covetous, derided him, *i. e.*, laughed at him, mocked him, and turned what he said to ridicule. Our Saviour, after rebuking them, enforces what he had said, by introducing two persons, viz: a Rich man and a Poor man. Look at them—

The Rich man was what most men would call a genteel liver ; living in good style, a prosperous and happy man. But, mark.—He dies—the next he finds of himself, he is in “torments.”—His riches, splendor, sumptuous fare, and rich dresses have all, all fled. Who does not see in his case the danger of riches and the folly of trusting in them. But the picture is made more striking by introducing

The Poor man.—He had no home—no food—doubtless poorly clothed, covered with “sores ;” instead of many physicians he had “dogs” for his medical aid. But, *he* dies. The next he finds of himself he is unspeakably “comforted ;” his “evil things” have passed away for ever. Who does not see, in a clear light, the dangerous tendency of worldly possessions ? Few persons can have them without indulging in an extravagance in dress, equipage, and food, which is ruinous to their souls ; or, which is equally fatal, making their happiness to consist in contemplating the largeness of their earthly treasures.

I consider this to be the main point designed to be illustrated—the folly and danger of seeking our good in this life. There are other points, viz :

2. To expose the deception common among the Jews, that they should be saved because they were the children of “Abraham.”

3. That this life is the only time to secure salvation—and the certainty of perishing without hope, if this period is neglected.

4. The sufficiency of the means now employed to turn men to God—and hence, the folly of supposing that some other means would be more effectual. They would not be “persuaded though one rose from the dead.”

But does this prove what is to be the punishment unto which the “rich man” is reserved? Certainly not. What that will be we are taught elsewhere in the Bible. This case, then, makes nothing against the theory I advocate.

I will next examine the language of our Lord, “Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” It is said this proves the soul immortal. I remark—

First. Whatever this punishment is, it is put in opposition to “life.” “If thy hand” or “foot offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt” or “maimed into life, than having two hands” or “feet,” &c., “where the worm,” &c. Who does not see that here is the opposite of life, and therefore is death, or utter extinction of being without possibility of escape? In a parallel passage, our Saviour saith, “If thy right eye” or “hand offend thee, cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.” Here the “worm that dieth not, and the fire” that “is not quenched,” we see, is another form of expression for *perishing*.

Again, I remark, this expression of our Lord is a quotation from Isaiah 66 : 24, and is applied to the “carcasses” of “men,” which I presume my opponents will not pretend were immortal. But if the language in one place proves immortality, why not in the other? Then we shall have immortal carcasses as well as immortal souls.

Once more, I observe. If the fire were quenched, they

would not be utterly consumed, but something would remain—there would not be an entire destruction. It is manifest to every mind, if a fire is quenched or put out, the work of utter destruction is arrested, and something is left of the object upon which the fire kindled. The same may be said, if the worm die the carcase will not be consumed ; but as the fire is not to be quenched, nor the worm die, therefore, they shall be utterly consumed, perish, cease to be found in the universe of God. The objector says, the idea of an unquenchable fire is, that it is never to go out. To show the fallacy of this, I will suppose my house is on fire. When my neighbours arrive to my help, I say, effort is useless—the fire is unquenchable. Pray, what do I mean ? That the fire will burn eternally ? Any school-boy knows I mean simply the house will be totally consumed. “ Yes,” says the objector, “ that is true when the expression is applied to that which is consumable, but this is not the case with the soul.” To this, I reply, That is the very point to be proved—that the soul is not consumable or destructible. The objector says it *is not*, and I affirm that *it is*.

If it is still maintained that “ unquenchable fire ” means “ never to go out,” I refer those persons to an examination of a few passages of God’s word on that question. 2 Chron. 34 : 25, “ Because they have forsaken me, and burned incense unto other Gods, therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon *this place*, and shall not be quenched.” Isa. 34 : 9, 10, “ And the land of Idumea shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day : the smoke thereof shall go up for ever.” Jeremiah 7 : 20, “ Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground, and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched.” Also, Jer. 17 : 27, “ Then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the places of Jerusalem, and shall not be quenched.” Once more. See Ezekiel 20 : 47, 48, “ Say to the forests of the South, Hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree ; the flaming

flame shall not be quenched ; and all flesh shall see that I, the Lord, have kindled it ; it SHALL NOT BE QUENCHED."

Now, I wish to know if any man in his senses will pretend that all these fires that shall not be quenched are "never to go out," in the strict sense of the term *eternal*? Does not any one see that so long as the things upon which the fire kindles are not proved to be immortal, the most extreme sense that can be fixed upon is, that there will be a total and irrecoverable destruction of them?

The objector's next resort is to our Lord's description of the final judgment. "And these shall go away into everlasting (eternal) punishment." Of course, says the objector, they must eternally be, to have the punishment eternal.

This is probably the strongest argument in favour of the supposed immortality of the wicked. Let us then inquire in what sense the term *eternal* is here to be understood? The same term is applied to the judgment itself in Heb. vi. 2, "Eternal judgment." Does this mean that the judgment will be eternally going on and never completed? or does it mean the final judgment? the judgment from which there is no appeal? and the results of which will be eternal? So I conceive "eternal punishment" signifies the final punishment—a punishment from which there is no appeal—from which there is no recovery—and the results of which are eternal.

Here I am asked, "May not eternal life, upon the same principle, be called eternal because the results of it are eternal?" I answer, it could not be called eternal life if it is ever to be succeeded by death. Therefore it would be a palpable contradiction to say the results of a thing are eternal which never had an existence. I admit that the results of eternal life are eternal; for the very idea of life is consciousness, and stands opposed to cessation of being. If the text under consideration had simply said of the righteous, These shall enter into everlasting rewards, I grant it might possibly bear the construction my opponent thinks deducible from my principles of interpretation, unless some other portion of the Bible clearly showed that the righteous are to be immortal; but that they are immortal is clearly and positively affirmed in the Scriptures.

Now let us inquire what is that punishment which is eternal? The apostle tells us in the first chapter of 2d Thess., "Who shall be punished with an everlasting destruction FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD," &c. Too filthy to be in the sight of a holy God, as they eternally must be if immortal, he destroys them out of his presence, purifies his universe from the filth of sin and sinners, thus fully accomplishing the work for which Christ was "manifested."

Some tell us that "destruction from the presence of the Lord," &c. means only that the wicked will be put away from the place where God's favourable presence is enjoyed, and the glorious manifestations of his power are seen. In reply, I would say, if that is the meaning of the text, can the objector show that the punishment of the wicked will be any thing more after the judgment, or different from what it was before in regard to the soul. He will not pretend that men who die in their sins are in the *favourable* presence of God before the judgment, and I have already shown that they are *reserved* unto the judgment to be punished; it is then that they are to have "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord," &c. I leave the candid to judge whether my opponent's construction or mine is the most natural.

It is said that "The terms employed to denote the bliss of the righteous and the misery of the wicked are the same." I suppose what the objector means is, that the qualifying terms, or the terms which denote the durability of the one are used also in reference to the other; for certainly he cannot mean that "life" and "death" are the same terms.

I admit the qualifying terms are the same. But what has the objector gained? Does he not see that our Lord has introduced a contrast? "The righteous into *life* eternal," the wicked "into eternal punishment." I ask if *eternal life in misery* is the opposite of eternal life simply? To make the contrast perfect, on the theory I oppose, it should read, or by fair inference bear this construction—These shall go away into an eternal life of punishment, but the righteous into an eternal life of happiness. Instead of this, the punishment is a simple contrast with *life*, and the fair

inference is, that it is *death*, without a possibility of recovery. That, I say, is the fair inference, unless you can prove their souls are immortal.

But again—

To this objection, I reply, the same terms are employed to denote the durability of God, and some portions of this earth. “*Everlasting God*” — “*Everlasting mountains*.” What would be thought of me if I should undertake to prove from this that the world will never have an end?—The texts quoted prove that the mountains are as eternal as God himself, just as much as the expressions denoting the durability of the bliss of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked prove that the conscious being of the latter is parallel with that of the former.

What is the scripture argument that the mountains will not endure as long as God endures? The Bible declares expressly that God is the “King eternal, immortal” — and it as expressly declares, that “The earth shall be melted, and the works that are therein shall be burned up;” so that the everlasting mountains will be destroyed, while the everlasting God still endures without end.

Now what is the Scripture argument that the righteous and the wicked are not equally immortal? The Bible expressly declares that the righteous “put on *immortality*” — that they have “eternal *life*,” and it as expressly declares that the wicked Christ will “burn up;” yea, that the Lord of Hosts “shall burn them up,” so that they shall be left “neither root nor branch” — that they shall *die* — be destroyed forever — perish — utterly perish, &c.

If I wanted to make infidels, I would still maintain that the wicked will have an eternal conscious being, in the face of God’s express declarations, like those above. When a “Thus saith the Lord” can be produced, that as expressly asserts the immortality of the wicked, as the language above does their extermination, then I may review the whole affair; but that cannot be done, in my judgment.

Another text, on which much reliance is placed, to support the common theory, is Jude 7th. “Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh,

are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Let us compare Scripture with Scripture. Peter, in his second epistle, gives us an account of this same matter.—He says, “If God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell—to be reserved unto the judgment; and spared not the old world, but saved Noah—a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example to those who after should *LIVE* ungodly,” &c.

Thus Peter throws light on Jude. Both together show most clearly what displeasure God has manifested against sinners in the invisible world, and in this. It is concerning what has been done in *this* world, we are here told, that God has made an example to those who should *after* live ungodly.

These judgments inflicted on the old world, Sodom and Gomorrah, are a standing, and perpetual, or “eternal” admonition, warning, or “example” to all men to the end of the world, that *live* ungodly; but it proves nothing as to what will constitute that punishment unto which they are expressly said, in this very connection, “to be *reserved*,” and which is *to be* inflicted at the day of judgment; which day is to be a day of “perdition of ungodly men.” And as *perdition* signifies *destruction*, the natural inference is, that the wicked will be utterly destroyed with an “everlasting destruction.”

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

In my own mind the conclusion is irresistible, that the final doom of all the impenitent and unbelieving, is that they shall “utterly perish”—that they shall be “destroyed forever”—that their “end” is to be “burned up, root and branch,” with “fire unquenchable”—that they shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the *second death*—that they shall not have everlasting life, or being, but be “punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord”—that the universe of God will be purified not only from sin, but sinners—that “the works of

the devil" will be destroyed, exterminated ; but "blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection ; on such the second death hath no power." Then there will be a "new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth have passed away." "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying ; neither shall there be any more pain ; for the former things have passed away."

The day when these tremendous scenes will transpire, I conceive, "is nigh, even at the doors." Yes, the time is at hand, when the wrath of God will be revealed from Heaven—a day, described by the apostle, of "indignation and wrath ; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil." Then they that have "sinned without law shall also perish without law ;" and a not less fearful doom awaits those that have sinned in the light of the law and gospel both.

That awful day will soon overtake us ; and who may abide the day of his coming ? Behold, that day "shall burn as an oven ; and all the proud, and all that do wickedly will be stubble ;" as incapable of resisting that wrath, that shall come upon them, as stubble is to resist the devouring flame.

Let us be wise now, therefore, and prepare to meet God. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little." "But blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

THIRD DISCOURSE.

' "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have *eternal life*, and they are they that testify of me ; and ye will not come unto me that ye might have *life*." John v. 39, 40.

Some translate this text, "Ye do search the Scriptures," &c. It makes very little difference which way it is understood, whether as a command of what should be done, or as a declaration of what was done. Either way, it shows the

immense value of the Scriptures, because they reveal eternal life; and it shows, too, that the object they had in searching, was to learn about eternal life—not a happy eternal life—a blissful eternal life—but eternal life, simply. And further, it shows that the Scriptures are the proper place to search for that inestimable blessing. Every man is bound to do this for himself, and not trust to his teachers alone, as I fear too many do.

Teachers may be good men—honest men; they may intend to lead the people into truth, and preserve them from error; yet they are but men—fallible men, and may “err not knowing the Scriptures;” and besides, it is possible they may be bad men, who may have some other object in view than to “save souls from death;” but if this is not the case, and they are sincere, still it must be recollected, we have all received our education, from the first dawnings of intellect, under an influence that has necessarily given our minds a bias to a particular theory, or mode of interpreting the Scriptures; that mode may be right, or it may be wrong; be it which it may, our teachers themselves have most likely had their opinions formed by it, and will teach it; but they cannot give an account for us to God; every man must give an account of himself.

It will avail us nothing, at the judgment, to plead that our teachers taught us so,—or, that ecclesiastical bodies decreed or established such a belief, or articles of faith. It will roll back in thunder tones in our ears—“Every one must give an account of himself to God.” “You had the Scriptures, and the injunction to search them—and if you have erred to the ruin of your soul through false teaching, you have done it with the words of eternal life in your hands; but which you have trusted others to interpret for you, instead of giving that application of your own minds to the subject which it was your duty to do, instead of being absorbed by the things of time.”

Would not such words be dreadful words in our ears at the great judgment day? Should we not then fully realize the truth of that Scripture which saith, “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man?”

Teachers may be *helps* to understand the Scriptures, but

should never be trusted as infallible guides ; nor should they ever be allowed to decide authoritatively for us, what the true meaning of God's word is. Any such attempt on the part of teachers, is a manifest usurpation of the prerogative of Jehovah, and should always be resisted. Let teachers in religion keep to their appropriate work ; which is not to be "lords over God's heritage," but to be "helpers," and "ensamples to the flock." They are not to decide who are heretics and who are orthodox, but to show men their sins — their perishing, dying condition, and point them to Christ, the great Physician, that they may "have life."

The expression of our Lord — "Ye will not come unto me that you might have life," shows that men are exposed to death. The only question, with us, in these discourses, is, to decide what that death is :—whether it is eternal life in misery, or destruction of being. My position is, that it is the latter ; and I have endeavoured to establish that point from the Scriptures. How far I have been successful in my attempt, others will judge for themselves. No man can believe without evidence. Some, it is true, will not believe whatever the evidence might be, unless they could find the thing proposed for belief was likely to be popular. But no one need calculate on popularity who sets himself to follow truth wherever it may lead him. Our Lord himself "was despised and rejected of men."

In my last discourse, I had brought down my examination of objections nearly to the close of the Bible. What remains for me to do, is, in the first place, to finish that examination ; then, I shall take up objections from other sources ; after which, I shall sustain my position by a mass of Scripture testimony not yet introduced but in part.

EXAMINATION OF SCRIPTURE OBJECTIONS CONTINUED.

The next objection I shall notice, grows out of Rev. 14 : 9 to 11. This text has, I believe, almost universally been applied to the final punishment of the wicked. If it did so apply, it would prove nothing more than that the wrath poured upon them, is awful. and, that from its effects there is to be no recovery. But to prove the immortality of the soul from this text, two things must be established, viz. .

That this is spoken of the punishment of the wicked in a future state; and if so, that the phrase "for ever and ever," is to be understood in its primary sense.

My own opinion is, that it relates to judgments inflicted in this world on Babylon. An angel had just cried, "Babylon is fallen," &c. ; then follows the description referred to. But some say, Babylon means the whole wicked power; and the destruction of all the wicked, in a future state, is brought to view. If so, then the presumption is greatly increased that the wicked are not immortal, from the fact that the Revelator says, in the 18th chapter, "She [Babylon] shall be utterly burnt with fire; and with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found *no more at all*."

God says in Isa. 34 : 10, of the land of Idumea, that it "shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever." Surely, no one will pretend that this language proves, that the land of Idumea is immortal. But it does, just as truly as the text in Rev. proves the wicked are immortal; and if that is admitted, then we may have not only immortal souls, and immortal carcasses, but immortal land! But if this expression does not prove the land of Idumea immortal, so neither can it prove wicked men are immortal,—that must be proved from some other source; if that can be done, and the text is established to be speaking of the punishment of the wicked in a future state, then I admit that the language employed necessarily implies the perpetuity, or eternity, of conscious being in torments: but till those points are proved, I must still maintain that the wicked have no immortality. Though I might rest the argument here, and leave my opponent to the burden imposed upon him, I shall, nevertheless, now attempt to show that Rev. 14 : 9 to 11, has its fulfilment on earth, and therefore is not spoken of the punishment of the wicked in a future state. Let us put down the text.

"If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and

he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone (an evident allusion to Sodom and Gomorrah,) in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb : and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, (an allusion to the smoke of the land of Idumea,) and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

The inquiry is—Is this wrath poured out in this world, or the world to come ? In other words, Are the judgments here spoken of, inflicted on earth, or in the invisible world !

The Revelator proceeds to describe judgments about to be executed on the worshippers of the beast ; and he tells us, chap. 15, that he "saw seven angels having the seven last plagues ; for in them is filled up the wrath of God—and one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels, seven golden vials full of the wrath of God." Immediately after this, at the 16th chapter, he says, "I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first angel poured out his vial upon the earth ; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image." How exactly does the judgment correspond with the threatening in the 14th chapter ! But look still further.

"The fourth angel poured out his vial upon the Sun ; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with a great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues ; and they repented not to give him glory."

"And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast, and his kingdom was full of darkness ; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."

Here, then, is a perfect fulfilment of the threatening found in the 14th chap. 9th to 11th verse ; and the apostle expressly tells us, it takes place "upon the earth." And if the term "forever and ever," in the text under consideration, is to be taken in its primary meaning, we shall be able to

prove that the "worshippers of the beast" will live *eternally* "upon the earth;" for that is where the "smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever."

I would here remark—That the judgment spoken of, in the text under consideration, cannot be the final punishment of the wicked; because that is to be an everlasting destruction *from* the presence of the Lord, and this is expressly said to be *in* the presence of the Lamb; so that the two scenes, whatever they may be, are not one and the same, but different events, which could not be the case if the common theory is correct.

When I stated, as my opinion, that "destruction from the presence of the Lord" is to be understood according to the plain and obvious meaning, i. e. *out* of the presence of the Lord, or extinction of being, the objector said—"No—it means from his *favourable* presence." The text before us says, they shall be "tormented in the presence of the Lamb." Does that mean in his "favourable" presence?

I now follow the advocates of the eternal conscious being of the wicked to their last resort in the Bible, viz: Rev. 20: 10, "The devil was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone—and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." In reply, I remark:

Some of the most learned men, and men, too, who believe in the common theory of the endless being of the wicked in torments, have represented that the "terms 'everlasting,' 'forever,' and the like, are uniformly used in the Scriptures to denote the longest possible duration of which the subject to which they are applied is capable."

If this representation is correct, and I see no reason to dissent from it, then the text under consideration proves that the devil, and his associates in misery, are to be tormented during the whole period of their being: and of course cuts off restorationism; but does by no means prove that Satan, or wicked men, are immortal; on the contrary, we are expressly taught, Heb. 2: 14, that Christ shall "destroy the devil." Not destroy the "*happiness*" of the devil—that is done already; but his person, *his being*. Any other construction of the words, I conceive, is uncalled for and unnatural, unless it can first be shown that he is immortal.

It is further evident that the devils themselves expect to be destroyed. "Hast thou come to destroy us," said they to him who will finally do that work. In one place they say, "Hast thou come hither to torment us before *the time*?" Both of these expressions show that the devils expect to be further tormented, and more awfully tormented, even with such anguish as shall result in their destruction: and how undescribably tremendous must be that wrath which shall utterly consume even a spirit; a wrath so tremendous that even mighty angels utterly perish under it! The wicked are to be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death; and are as truly and really destroyed as "death and hell."

If it be said—"Cast into the lake of fire, this is the second death," means not that they shall actually die; but that being *in* the lake of fire is the second death, though they will never be burned up, I reply, such an interpretation contradicts the explicit testimony of God's word, which declares, the wicked shall be burned *up*. "The lake that burneth with fire and brimstone," is a phrase used to represent the second death. It points out the awful anguish of a dying sinner in his last struggle for life. The expression may represent awful torments not resulting in death; but here it is expressly said, "this is the second death;" which leaves no room to doubt of its meaning.

If the phrase "second death," when applied to death and hell, signifies an utter extermination, as Dr. Adam Clark thinks, then I can see no good reason for denying that the same is the fate of the wicked, as the language employed is the same; unless it can be first proved that the wicked are immortal from some other portion of the Bible than that which speaks of their punishment. The arguments used by my opponents to prove the eternal conscious being of the wicked, is drawn from the language which speaks of their punishment, or torments. And why do they infer, that this language proves the eternal conscious being of the wicked? Because, say they, the *soul is immortal*! That is the very point to be proved. Their argument, when put in form, stands thus:

First proposition:—The soul is immortal.

Inference :—The wicked will have eternal conscious being in misery.

Second proposition :—The wicked will have eternal conscious being in misery.

Inference :—Therefore the soul is immortal.

Here an attempt is made to establish the truth of the first *proposition* by an *inference* drawn from that proposition ; when the truth of that inference, itself, depends upon the truth of the first proposition. Hence it is evident that nothing can be proved in this way to sustain the doctrine of the immortality of the wicked. It is reasoning in a *circle*.

Here, again, I refer to the language of Richard Watson, in his "Institutes." Though he believed in the eternal being of all souls, yet he says, vol. ii. page 250, the notion "that the soul is *naturally* immortal is contradicted by Scripture, which makes our immortality a gift, dependent on the will of the giver." And again, page 167 and 168, 2d volume, he calls the doctrine of the "natural immortality of the soul" an "absurdity." The question then is, does God "give" immortality to any but the "holy." My opponents say, "Yes ;" and I answer *No*. "Blessed and *holy* is he who hath part in the first resurrection : *on such* the SECOND DEATH *has no power*." All others will experience it, and forever be cut off from immortality.

OTHER OBJECTIONS.

Having examined every important text that I know of, relied upon in the Bible, to establish the common theory, I do not consider that my opponents have any claim upon me to answer other objections, not having their foundation in the Scriptures ; as the book of God is the only infallible rule of faith. I have no fear, however, to look in the face objections from other sources, and shall notice all of them that have come within my knowledge.

First, then, it is said, "The benevolence of God obliges him to inflict the greatest possible punishment, in order to deter men from sin."

To say nothing of the absurdity of such a proposition, it is enough to reply that the common sense of every en-

lightened and Christianized people, as well as their *practice*, condemns such a view of benevolence.

Suppose the Legislature of this State should pass a law, as they have done, condemning the murderer to death ; and suppose the judge, on the conviction of the criminal, should proceed to pronounce sentence, by saying—" You, the prisoner, are clearly convicted of the crime specified in the law ; you are, therefore, to suffer the penalty of said law, which is, that you be tortured over a slow fire—and to prevent your *dying*, an able and skilful physician will stand by you, with powerful remedies, to prevent the fire from causing death ; but said fire is to be as terrible as it can possibly be made, and without *intermission*. In this manner you are to be tormented till death shall come upon you from some other cause ; which, however, should never take place if we possessed power to prevent it !" And then suppose the judge should add :—" That is the penalty of the law under which you are now to suffer !"

I ask if all New York—yea, all the nation, and the civilized world would not be horror-struck by such a decision ? Would not all conclude the judge was insane, and ought to be immediately removed from office ? If he should attempt to justify himself, by showing that he had given a constitutional construction of the law of the State, would it not be thought that he was stark mad ? And if he should succeed in establishing his position of the correctness of his decision, would not the whole State be in arms to alter or abolish such laws ? and if they found that such a state of things was fastened upon them by some unalterable necessity, would not the State itself, with all its rich lands, be abandoned by its inhabitants, as some Sodom and Gomorrah that was nigh unto destruction ?

If the case I have supposed differs from that attributed to God's law, and the administration under it—upon the common theory of death signifying eternal conscious being in undescribable misery, then I confess myself incapable of seeing the difference, except it be in *one* point, viz. : the judge spoken of has not *power* to protract the sufferings of the condemned person beyond a *limited* period ; God has *almighty* and *irresistible* power in punishing.

If, as is contended, the greatest possible punishment is required by benevolence, to deter men from sin, why do we not see civilized nations adopting that principle in enacting their laws? The fact is, the legislation of all nations who acknowledge the Bible, gives the lie to such a theory! And how is it accounted for, I ask, that those nations, that are called "Christian nations," have so far modified their laws as to be at an almost infinite remove from those called savage? Is it not because, though men have not in reality become Christians, yet the Bible has had such an influence on the mass of mind, that the conviction is almost universal among them, that no "cruel or unusual punishments" shall be "inflicted?" I ask again, if this fact does not prove that the influence of the gospel is against the common theory of eternal life in misery? Or in other words, do not the principles of the gospel, carried out in practical life, give the lie to the theory I oppose?

Punishment in some form, to transgressors, all admit is requisite to maintain government. But let us inquire what is the design of punishment? It may be said to consist mainly in two particulars, viz: 1st. To prevent the recurrence of crime on the part of the transgressor; and 2d. To deter others from the commission of crime.

Let me now ask, Is it necessary that the impenitent sinner should live a life of eternal conscious misery, to prevent the recurrence of sin on his part? This will not be pretended by any one. So far from it, the advocates of the theory I oppose, maintain, that the sinner will be eternally sinning, and eternally being punished for those sins; which, however, neither does nor can produce reformation; nor, in fact, is it designed to. Upon the common theory, then, sin and the works of the devil never will be destroyed, and the punishment does not answer the end of punishment, in preventing the recurrence of crime; for it will be eternally recurring. But if the sinner is actually destroyed, and ceases to be, there is an effectual prevention of the recurrence of sin, on the part of the transgressor.

If, then, the end of punishment is answered, so far as the sinner is concerned, by his utter destruction, and cannot be by the opposite theory, let us now inquire whether the

eternal conscious being of the sinner in torments is necessary to deter others from sin? To suppose that it is, is to suppose that the inhabitants of Heaven are kept in subjection to God, on the same principle that slave-holders keep their slaves to their toil, *i. e.*, by the terror of the lash, or some other fearful torture. No such principle, I apprehend, will be needed in the presence of God and the Lamb—and that, too, after our state of trial is over for ever, and the righteous are crowned with eternal life, and made kings and priests unto God, to reign for ever and ever, filled with unmeasured consolation, and surrounded by immeasurable glory.

Besides, if the wicked are all destroyed, and mingle no more with the righteous for ever, the greatest temptation to sin is removed. The past recollection of evil would, most likely, be all-sufficient to prevent sin, even on the supposition that it were possible for temptation to arise, which I do not believe it will be, when the righteous dwell in the immediate presence of God and the Lamb, where there is fulness of joy and pleasure for ever more. Surely there can be no need, to persons thus situated, to listen to the groans of the damned, and gaze on their torments, to keep them in obedience. The thought, to me, is little, if any, short of blasphemy.

But, the notion that benevolence requires the greatest possible punishment to be inflicted, is expressly contradicted by the Bible. Our Lord Jesus Christ informs us that some “shall be beaten with few stripes.” Of course the greatest possible punishment is not inflicted, but only such as is necessary to secure the honour of a violated law, and answer the end of government.

It is said, “sin is an infinite evil, and therefore the sinner must have an infinite punishment.” And I ask, if it may not be said, in an important sense, that that punishment, from which a sinner never recovers, is infinite? But how is it proved that sin is an infinite evil, which is committed by a finite being in time? The answer is, it is committed against an infinite God. I reply, that, upon the same principle, a punishment inflicted upon a finite being,

in a limited time, is an infinite punishment, because inflicted by an infinite Being.

Again, it is objected to my views, that "it is no punishment at all." "If," continues the objector, "the wicked are to be struck out of being, it's quick over, and that is the end of it."

In reply, I say—I do not know how long the work of utter destruction will be in being accomplished. We know, in this world, some men die instantly, with little pain going before; whilst others linger in distress a long time, and then die in the most undescrivable pain. So it may be in the "second death." Some sinners, for reasons known to the divine mind, and which may be developed at the day of judgment, may perish at once; whilst others, for their greater wickedness, may endure protracted torments, with increased marks of the Almighty's displeasure, such as shall clearly develop the meaning of our Lord's words, that he "which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes,"—whilst "he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few;" but in both cases it will result in their utter destruction. Here the principle is distinctly brought to view, of a difference in the degree of torment that will be inflicted on the finally impenitent.

For example. A child, who has just arrived to the years of understanding, and has personally committed sin, dies impenitent. Is his punishment to be equal to that of a Voltaire? The objector says, "No. The horror of Voltaire will be the greatest." That is, he says, "The fire will be the same, but their worm will be different." But, if eternal conscious being in torment is the true doctrine, I ask, what is it gives the horror itself its keenness and point, but the fact that the torment is to be without cessation of conscious being?

It matters but little to me, as to the anguish I feel, whether my little finger is burning or my whole frame, if it is certain that the anguish I endure is never to cease. The common notion of the punishment of the wicked, I conceive, makes in fact no distinction in the punishment, whe-

ther it be a child or an old sinner—a heathen or a sinner from a Christian land—a slave, brutalized by his master, and denied God's word, or that ungodly master himself. On the other hand, my view, whilst it admits that the result is the same to all, viz.: utter extinction of being, yet, the degrees of torment prior to that event and at the time in which it finally takes place, are various, according to the degrees of guilt of the transgressors.

Henry, in his Commentary, says—"By the damnation of the wicked the justice of God will be eternally *satisfying*, but never *satisfied*."

This doctrine is undoubtedly correct, on the supposition that the common theory is true, but it represents God as incapable of satisfying his justice, or as wanting in a disposition to do so. Either of these positions, one would suppose, is sufficiently absurd to be rejected by a reflecting mind.

The penalty of God's law is something to be inflicted, or it is not; if it is not to be inflicted, then men may not be punished at all for their sins; but if it is to be inflicted on the impenitent, then it cannot be eternal conscious being in misery; for in that case, it would only be *inflicting* but never *inflicted*; indeed, in that way justice could not be said to be even *satisfying*; for that cannot be said to be satisfying that is *never* to be satisfied; that is a plain contradiction. Could a man be said to be satisfying his hunger if it was impossible ever to satisfy it? Or again, is the "grave" *satisfying*, of which the wise man says, that it is "never satisfied?"

Benson outstrips Henry. So far from the justice of God making any approach towards satisfying itself, according to Benson, the sinner outstrips justice in the race. Speaking of the damned, he says:—"They must be perpetually swelling their enormous sum of guilt, and still running deeper, immensely deeper, in debt to divine and infinite justice. Hence, after the longest imaginable period, they will be so far from having discharged their debt—that they will find more due than when they first began to suffer."

How much glory such a theory reflects upon the infinite

God, I leave others to judge. This same commentator says in another place—"Infinite justice arrests their guilty souls, and confines them in the dark prison of hell, till they have satisfied all its demands by their personal sufferings, which, alas ! they can never do."

So, it seems, the Great and Infinite Being is perfectly incapable of obtaining satisfaction to his justice ! But I will not dwell upon this point.

I will call your attention to one thought more before I close this discourse. Are we to suppose that the Creator of all men will inflict a punishment on men of which he has given them no intimation ? For example—wicked men who have not revelation to unfold the invisible world. Are we to believe that they are to be punished with eternal conscious being in undescribable torments, of which they had never heard ?

They have no intimation of eternal conscious being in misery. They know there is misery, for they experience it ; but they have always seen misery terminate in death. Of misery followed by death, they have something more than intimation ; but of eternal life in misery they can have no idea. No—nor can we, who have that doctrine taught us by ministers. We can have no idea of a life of misery that never results in death. We may have illustrations given us, but they cannot touch it, and no finite mind can have any conception of it ; this is evident from the illustrations used to attempt to describe it ; for example—Benson, after painting the unutterable miseries of the damned, till his own soul chills with horror, and his "heart bleeds," thus attempts to describe the duration of that misery :

"Number the stars in the firmament, the drops of rain, sand on the seashore ; and when thou hast finished the calculation, sit down and number up the ages of woe. Let every star, every drop, every grain of sand, represent one million of tormenting ages. And know that as many more millions still remain behind, and yet as many more behind these, and so on without end."

Now I ask if any definite idea is conveyed to the mind by such an illustration ? And if not, what influence can

it have upon him? If it produces any action, it must be as lacking in definiteness as the ideas that possess the mind.

Tell a man of something, concerning which he can form a definite idea, and it must have more influence upon him. Tell him he is dying, perishing—really, actually, literally, not figuratively perishing: of that he can form some idea, and hence, it will be more likely to move him to right action, than that of which he can have no such definite knowledge.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

I have endeavoured to establish the position, that men are perishing; in other words, that they are labouring under a fatal disease, that will result in death, or an utter extermination of being, unless it is removed. All men are dying. The death to which they are hastening is the effect of sin, and sin is the transgression of the law of their moral nature, which will as certainly result in the death of the soul, as the violation of the law of our physical nature will result in the death of our body, unless that order can be restored which has been interrupted by these violations.

In this view of the subject, we have a beautiful and forcible parallel between the disorders of the body and those of the soul—and between the attempts to heal the body, and the attempts to heal the soul, or save it alive. There are, it is true, quacks in both. I will not stop now to determine who they are in either case; my business is to show unto men their disease and danger, or their sins, and the consequences to which they lead; and then point them to the sure, the faithful, the kind and glorious Physician, the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. He came down from Heaven, and entered our moral graveyard, where souls are dying, and proclaimed Life—"ETERNAL LIFE."

He calls us to believe in him. And what does this faith imply? It implies, of course, that we feel we are morally diseased and dying. No man would ask or receive the aid of a physician who felt himself whole; for "the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

Again, faith in Christ, the great Physician, implies confidence in his ability to heal, or save the soul alive. No man employs a physician in whose skill he has no confidence. When a sick man finds one in whom he has perfect confidence, he shows his faith in him something like this : "Doctor," he says, "I know you are a skilful practitioner, and I believe you perfectly understand my disorder, and I wish you to undertake for me—I wish to put myself entirely under your care." "But," the doctor replies, "I cannot heal you, unless you will strictly follow my directions ; no medicine, however valuable, and no physician, however skilful, can restore health, and prolong life, if you persist in the violation of the laws of your physical nature ; you must therefore determine to give yourself entirely up to follow my directions, or you must die ; you can have your choice."

Now, if the man consents to do this, he acts faith in that physician ; and when he gets well, he will doubtless give the doctor all the credit of his cure, and be very likely to recommend him to others. Now, that is faith, active faith. Go to Christ, the soul's Physician, in the same way, and your sins, which are the moral disease, will be removed, and your perishing, dying souls will be made alive—yes, have life, and live eternally : but, if you refuse the great Physician, your souls must die—die past hope, past recovery—die under an awful weight of guilt—die eternally. But you do not die without a mighty effort on the part of Christ and his followers to save you. Jesus wept over dying men when here on earth ; and with all the compassion of the Son of God, in the most tender pity he said, in the language of my text : "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."—Shall the Saviour make this lamentation over any of you ? O, come to Christ and live.

FOURTH DISCOURSE.

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” 1 Thes. v. 21.

“To “prove,” in the sense of the text, signifies “to try—to bring to the test.” The apostle was far from adopting the theory of some, in the present day, who seem to think it evidence that a man is a heretic if he presumes to examine for himself with regard to the truth of those theories which men, who have been in reputation for wisdom and piety, have seen fit to baptize as the true faith. They may have seen the truth clearly, or they may not. Whether they have or not, it does not release us from the obligation of *proving all things* for ourselves. Not to do this, we might nearly as well have been constituted idiots; as, in point of fact, we make ourselves so, by taking for truth, without investigation, the opinions of fallible men.

We are not indeed to despise helps in our investigations: but every thing is to be brought to the test—the infallible word of God.

Nor are we to allow ourselves to think, as some seem to maintain, that we are to exercise a blind faith in a theory, however contrary to reason. Reason, it is true, cannot find out God, nor the things of God, unaided.—Hence God has been pleased to give us revelation; and that revelation is made to man’s reason, or understanding. To talk to a man about believing that which is contrary to his reason, is the most consummate folly. Is it possible for a man to believe that two and two make six? or that unequal things are exactly equal? To propose such absurdities for belief is to attempt to annihilate all tests of truth, and leave a man to wander in the mazes of conjecture. We hardly know which to pity most, the man who attempts such a work, or those who are duped by it.

The fact is—God appeals to man’s reason. “Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord.” The disciples “communed together, and reasoned.” See Luke 24: 15. Acts 17: 2, we are told, “Paul, as his manner was—

reasoned with them out of the Scriptures." And 18 chap. 4 v., "He reasoned in the synagogues every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." Before Felix he "reasoned" till his royal hearer "trembled."

We may rest assured, then, that God has given us our reason to be used ; and we are commanded to be ready to give a reason of the hope that is in us.

There may be many truths that reason can never find out ; hence the necessity of revelation ; but revelation can contain nothing contrary to reason—that is impossible ; for, I repeat it, it would be no revelation at all, but darkness and obscurity itself. Reason then occupies an important place. It is its province to judge of the truth of that which professes to be a revelation ; if that professed revelation is clearly contrary to reason, no man can credit it but a rank fanatic : It is to confound truth and falsehood, and take away all power of discriminating between them.

Reason, however, is to be allowed to do her work untrammelled. Reason may be blinded. There is no way in which it is so likely to be perverted as by the love of sin. If men are in love with sin, and are determined to persist in it, they may expect to reason incorrectly — though their decisions, in that case, can hardly be said to be the voice of reason ; it is rather the voice of passion, or appetite ; for, even in such cases, the strife of reason, to be heard, is easily discovered, if a man will observe the workings of his own mind. But, our Saviour has decided that the man who "will do" the will of God, *i. e.* has a purpose, or determination, to do that will, wherever it may lead him, "he shall *know* of the doctrine."—Before reasoning, then, we should see to it that we have that purpose : else we may go astray.

With these remarks, I proceed to a further examination of objections to the theory I advocate. If those objections are reasonable, and the unreasonableness of them cannot be shown, then you are bound to "hold" them "fast," as "good." If they are to your mind shown to be without reason, as well as without Scripture authority, you are equally bound to give them up.

EXAMINATION OF OBJECTIONS CONTINUED.

It is said, "the *fathers* believed in the *endless* torments of the wicked." In reply, I remark, Our Lord and Master has prohibited my calling any man *father*. But, if the fathers, as they are called, did believe that doctrine, they learned it from the Bible, or they did not. If they learned it there, so can we. If they did not learn it from the Bible, then their testimony is of no weight. It may have been an error that early got into the Church, like many others.

Mosheim, in his Church History, tells us, as early as the third century, that the defenders of Christianity, in their controversies, "degenerated much from primitive simplicity," and that the maxim which asserted the innocence of defending truth by artifice and falsehood, "contributed" to this degeneracy. And he adds :—

"This disingenuous and vicious method of surprising their adversaries by artifice, and striking them down, as it were, by lies and fictions, produced, among other disagreeable effects, a great number of books, which were falsely attributed to certain great men, in order to give these spurious productions more credit and weight; for, as the greatest part of mankind are *less governed by reason* than authority, and prefer in many cases, the decisions of fallible mortals to the unerring dictates of the divine word, the disputants, of whom we are speaking, thought they could not serve the truth more effectually than by opposing illustrious names, and respectable authorities to the attacks of its adversaries."

This practice spoken of by Mosheim, increased as the darker ages rolled on; and through these dark ages, what there are of the writings of the "fathers" have come down to us. It is a truth, also, that the practice of corrupting the simplicity of the apostolic doctrine was commenced much earlier than the third century. Enfield, in his philosophy, says: "The first witness of Christianity had scarcely left the world when" this work began. Some of the "fathers" seemed intent on uniting heathen philosophy with Christianity, and early commenced the practice of clothing the doctrines of religion in an allegorical dress.

You may judge, what dependence can be placed upon the "fathers" in settling what is Bible truth.

Again it is said,—The Jews held the doctrine of eternal conscious being in torments. This is proved, not from their Scriptures, the place where it should be found, if true, but from the writings of Josephus.

The same may be urged against the infallibility of some things found in Josephus, as in the "fathers;" for it is certain, as I have before shown, that there was a large class among the Jews that did not believe it; viz. the Sadducees, who did not believe in the existence of spirits at all, and of course could not have held to their eternal conscious being in torments.

But what if the Jews did believe it? They believed too that the Messiah would set up a temporal kingdom; and "many other such like" foolish things. Are we to go to their ignorance and superstition to learn the knowledge of the Most High? The fact is, the Jewish Scriptures, the Old Testament, no where teach that doctrine.

My attention will be called to Isa. 33: 14. "Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" This looks the most like teaching that doctrine of any thing in the Old Testament. But the text itself refutes the theory it is brought to prove; for it tells us, expressly, the fire is a devouring fire. What is the meaning of the term "devour?" According to Walker, it signifies "To eat up"—"to consume"—"*to annihilate*." Surely then, my opponents gain nothing from this text, for it is wholly in my favour.

Besides, such questions often imply the *impossibility* of a thing; e. g. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" i. e. There is no escape. So—"Who shall dwell with devouring fire?" implies the impossibility of any person doing it, as it will utterly destroy, or consume him. I will give the objector one text from the Old Testament, that he may weigh along with this. It is Ps. 92: 7, "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be DESTROYED FOREVER." I have said, the Jewish Scriptures no where teach the common theory; so far from

it, they wind up with the most solemn declaration, calling the attention of all men to the fact, "Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven : and *all* the proud, yea, all that do wickedly, shall be stubble ; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

But suppose I were to admit, that the Jews did hold the doctrine of endless being in misery, as my opponents say : what then ? Why, say they, that is strong evidence it must be true ; because, if it had not been, the Saviour and his apostles would have taught the contrary.

I reply, first : Many of the Jews believed in the pre-existent state of souls : or, their existence in some other body prior to those they now inhabit. It was owing to this idea, that we find the disciples of our Lord, in John 9 : 2, asking him, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was *born* blind ?" This question shows, that even the apostles had imbibed the notion common among the Jews at that time. They supposed that in some previous state he might have sinned ; and hence, as a judgment, was born blind. Does not the same reasoning which says, the Jews believed in the eternal conscious being of the wicked in misery, and therefore it must be true, because the Saviour did not refute it, prove that the doctrine of the transmigration of souls is true, because the Jews believed it, and our Saviour did not refute it ?

But again,—I maintain, that Christ and his apostles *did teach the contrary* of *endless being* in misery ; and that, as clear as language could make it ; and I think I have already shown this ; but I will now say, I have read the New Testament carefully through, and noted down every text that speaks of the final destiny of the wicked ; or that can be construed as referring to it. Let us look at these texts and see if any language could well express more clearly and forcibly, the *utter extirpation* of the wicked.

TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. *John the Baptist.* Matt. 3 : 10—"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast *into the fire.*" It appears to me—

This language imports, clearly, an utter extinction of being, and nothing short. Again, in the 12th verse, John says of Christ—"He will burn *up* the chaff with unquenchable fire." Here the language denotes nothing less than the previous : and is, most clearly, a reference to the words of the Lord by Malachi, chap. 4 : 1. John 3 : 36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life : he that believeth not the Son shall not see life."

John, then, does not teach the common notion of eternal conscious being in torments, but utter destruction of being if there is any meaning in language. If, then, the Jews did hold the doctrine of endless being in misery, or the immortality of the wicked, as some pretend, John's preaching was directly calculated to overthrow it. The next witness is,

2. *Jesus Christ, our Lord.* Matt. 5 : 29, 30—"For it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Let it be kept in mind that the term *perish*, primarily, signifies "to cease to have existence." Now, I ask the candid, if the one member here is not, by our Lord, put in opposition to the whole body ? and if so, is not the sense of this passage expressed thus—if one member is diseased it will cause the whole body to perish unless that member is removed ; better, therefore, that one member should be cut off and perish than that the whole body perish.

But, again, Matt. 7 : 13, 14—"Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat ; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life."

Here, as destruction is put in opposition to life, and signifies to be consumed ; or, as Walker says, "In theology, eternal death," it cannot mean eternal life in misery, but a "ceasing to be ;" unless we would confound the use of all language, and adopt the notion, that the common people cannot understand the Bible, and therefore it ought not to be put into their hands. In fact, have we not come to that pass already ? How much short of this is it, when we are told, at least indirectly, that the language of the Scriptures

is so figurative that we are not to give the obvious and literal sense of the words, as in reading other books ?

But let us hear our Saviour further : Matt. 7 : 19—“ Every tree that bringeth forth not good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.” The same idea and the same language as that used by John the Baptist. I ask if it imports any thing short of utter destruction ?

Matt. 10 : 28—“ Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul ; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” I ask if this language does not clearly imply, that God is able to kill the soul ? and does it not as clearly affirm, that he will kill or destroy utterly the wicked ? I have no fear for the answer from the candid and unprejudiced.

Once more ; Matt. xiii : 40, 50—“ As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world : the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just ; and shall cast them into the furnace of fire ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” How is it possible for words more clearly to denote an utter destruction of being, accompanied with the most bitter anguish ? How can these words be tortured to mean *eternal conscious being* ?

Matt. xvi : 25, 28—“ Whosoever will save his life shall lose it” &c. “ For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul ?”

Here is no idea of eternal conscious being, or a miserable eternal life : but a loss of *life*, of the soul itself. It could not be a loss of the soul, if the soul continues in being. No, says the objector, it means loss of happiness to the soul. I reply, a loss of happiness is one thing, and the loss of the soul is another and a very different thing. Suppose I should interpret the expression, “ Whoever will save his life shall lose it,” to signify that the person who seeks to save his life shall lose, not his life, but the happiness of it ! Would not the objector himself call it a perversion of the Scriptures ? But it is no more a perversion than for him to say, the loss of the soul means only the loss of its happiness.

Again, Matt. xviii : 8, 9—“ Cut off thy hand ; pluck out thine eye if” they “ cause thee to offend,” for “ it is better

for thee to enter into life halt or maimed," or "with one eye, than to be cast into everlasting" or "hell fire."

Here the punishment is the opposite of life, which it could not be, if the wicked are to have endless life or eternal conscious being.

Thus then we fail to find, in the language of our blessed Lord, the doctrine of eternal conscious being in torments; but we do find that the punishment of the wicked will result in the loss of life; preceded by sufferings more or less protracted; set forth as the anguish fire produces on this corporeal system, and by the "wailing and gnashing of teeth." We find, then, if I mistake not, no countenance to the supposed Jewish notion of eternal conscious being in misery.

Let us now examine,

3. *Peter's Testimony.* Acts iii : 23—"Every soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." This language cannot relate to a destruction in this world, nor, as some suppose, to a violent destruction from this world, unless it can be shown that all who have refused to hear Christ have been thus destroyed. But this cannot be done; for, the unbelieving Jews have existed on earth to this day. It must therefore relate to a destruction yet future.

Acts viii : 20—"Thy money perish with thee." Again, 2 Peter, ii : 1—"Bring upon themselves swift destruction." Also, 12th verse—"These as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, shall utterly perish." This, certainly, does not look like teaching the common theory, that the wicked are immortal; and I know not how any form of expression could more forcibly teach the utter extermination of the wicked. At the 17th verse, he says of certain wicked characters, "To whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever." This expression, to my mind, carries the idea of a total destruction; as light is sometimes put for life in the Scriptures; as, for example, "the life was the light of man," so darkness is put for death; and the "mist of darkness forever," I conceive, implies an utter extinction of being.

But again, 3d chap.—"The heavens and earth—are

reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and *perdition* of ungodly men." "Perdition," according to Walker, signifies "Destruction — Ruin — Death — Loss — Eternal Death." Which of these definitions favours the common theory of eternal conscious being?

Again at the 9th verse Peter says: "The Lord is not willing that any should *perish*," &c. Lastly he tells us, at the 16th verse, that some "wrest the Scriptures to their own *destruction*."

Thus I have noticed every passage found in Peter's testimony concerning the final destiny of wicked men; and I ask my candid hearers, if it were not for the tiammels thrown around our minds by tradition, if we should ever give any other interpretation to these texts than the plain obvious one of *destruction of being*? So it seems to me. I come to—

4. *James' Testimony.* Let us now hear what he has to say. 1st chap. 15th verse, he says: "Sin when it is finished bringeth forth *death*;" and again, 5th chap. 20th verse, he says: "He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a *soul* from *death*." How can a man in his senses maintain that the soul is "deathless," with such testimony before his eyes? And why should we submit to this mistifying the plain language of the Holy Spirit to keep an old theory alive, which cannot live in the light of a literal construction of scripture language, and when no good reason can be given for departing from the literal meaning?

5. *John's Testimony.* 1st John 2: 17. "The world passeth away and the lusts thereof; but he that doeth the will of God *abideth forever*." The inference is irresistible, that the wicked *will not* abide forever.

Again—Rev. 20: 14, 15. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the *second death*. And whosoever was not found written in the *book of life* was cast into the lake of fire": i. e. they experience the pains of the *second death*, a death of soul and body, or of the whole man: and this because they would not come unto Christ that they "might have *life*."

Let us hear this apostle once more. Rev. 21: 8. But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and mur-

derers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone ; which is the second death."

Other passages in Rev. supposed to refer to the final punishment of the wicked, I have noticed in another place. I leave you to judge to which theory, that of *endless* being, or *destruction* of being, the testimony of John belongs.

6. *Jude's Testimony.* Sixth verse, he says : "The angels which kept not their first estate, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." Here we have an account of sinning angels, and learn that they are "reserved ;" but for what are they reserved ? First—for judgment ; i. e. to be judged ; and the fair inference is, they are after that to receive their punishment, according to the declaration of Peter, that "God knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment *to be punished.*" I suppose it will be admitted by all that the fallen angels are now *tormented* ; but *that* is not *the* punishment they are to have for their sins, though it is a *consequence* of their sins. What, then, is to be their punishment ? Let them speak for themselves. "Art thou come to destroy us ?" said they to him of whom the apostle says to the Hebrews, he shall "destroy him who hath the power of death, that is the devil." But if the testimony of the devils, nor that of the apostle are sufficient, then hear that of the "Lord God" himself. Addressing the old serpent, the devil, he said : "The seed of the woman shall *bruise thy head* ;" an expression so familiar to all, that I hardly need add, that no language could more forcibly point out the utter destruction of the devil.

Again—Jude, speaking of certain wicked characters, says,—"Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." The figure here used denotes an utter, total, and eternal obscurity, or disappearing.—No language scarcely could be conceived of, that would more forcibly denote the utter destruction of the wicked—of their *being* itself, so that they appear no more forever.

7. *Testimony of Paul.* I have already said, we have not a particle of evidence in the Acts of the Apostles of the truth of the common theory of the eternal conscious being

of the wicked, the very place where we should expect to find it, if any where in the Bible, because the Apostles addressed the most wicked men ; but we hear Paul saying to the wicked Jews—" Seeing ye judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life." Not everlasting happiness, or happy life ; but simply life. And the same wicked characters he cautions to beware lest they "perish." Why did he not thunder in their ears, eternal conscious being in torments, if he believed it ? Surely the subjects he addressed were as fit for such a state as any men well could be ; for they "contradicted and blasphemed." But so far as punishment was concerned, the apostle seems to have had no stronger language than "perish."

Rom. 1 : 32—The apostle says, of certain wicked characters—" They which commit such things are worthy of death." And in the second chapter, after speaking of the result of seeking for honour, and glory, and *immortality*, —viz : *eternal life*, he adds— As many as have sinned without law shall *perish* without law—in the day God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. Here the time and nature of the punishment of a certain class of sinners is clearly pointed out : and the language is directly opposed to the common notion of eternal conscious being.

Again—Rom. 6 : 21—23—" For the *end* of these things is *death*. But now being made free from sin—ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the *end*, *everlasting life*. For the wages of sin is *death* : but the gift of God is *eternal life*, through Jesus Christ." Here, then, the apostle teaches the opposite of the common theory—and denounces death upon them. How strange he had not told them, they had "deathless spirits !" What force there must have been in his preaching in that case ! !

Rom. 8 : 13—The apostle says—" If ye live after the flesh ye shall *die*." Again,— " Who shall deliver me from the body of this *death* ?" And again—" To be carnally minded is *death* ;" and at the ninth chapter, he speaks of " vessels of wrath fitted to *destruction* ;" and 14th chapter, 15 and 20, he says—" *Destroy* not him with thy meat for whom Christ died. For meat *destroy* not the work of God."

Let us now look into the First Epistle to the Corinthians, 1st chapter, 18th verse—"For the preaching of the cross is to them that *perish*, foolishness." 3d chapter, 17th verse,—"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God *destroy*." 8th chapter, 11th v.—"Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother *perish* for whom Christ died;" and 15th chapter, 18 v.—"Then they that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished"—if Christ be not risen; and 2d Corth. 2d chapter 15—16 v.—"For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are *saved* and in them that *perish*. To the one we are a savor of *death* unto *death*; and to the other the savor of *life* unto *life*." Can any thing be plainer? Who would ever dream that the apostle meant, by such language, eternal conscious being to the wicked, if he had not been *creedized* into it?

Gal. 6 : 8—"He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption—(not immortality) but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting."

Phil. 1 : 28—"Which is to them an evident token of *perdition*;" and 3d : 19—"Whose *end* is *destruction*."

1 Thess. 5 : 3—"Sudden *destruction* cometh upon them—and they shall not escape."

2 Thess. 1 : 8, 9—"Who shall be punished with *everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord," &c. 2 Thess. 2 : 10—"In them that *perish*." Hebrews 6 : 8—"That which beareth thorns and briars is nigh unto cursing, whose *end* is to be *burned*." Is there any thing left of thorns and briars when they are burned? Tenth chap. 26 to 39 v.—"Fiery indignation which shall *devour* the adversaries," &c. "We are not of them that draw back unto *perdition*; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

This closes up the apostle's testimony; and it is astonishing to me that I ever believed the common notion of eternal conscious being of the wicked. In the language I have quoted, is there not a sufficient refutation of that notion, even if the Jews did hold it, as some pretend? I believe I have now gone through with an examination of every text in the New Testament that directly relates to the subject, except a few which are parallel to those I have

examined in Matthew, and therefore need not, at present, be taken up.

A few days since, a minister of the gospel, who has studied the Scriptures with unusual attention, said to me—"If the Apostle Paul believed in the destruction of the wicked, why did he not preach it?" I replied—he did preach it; and he never preached any other doctrine. I then read to him every passage in the Bible where Paul speaks in reference to the destiny of the wicked. He seemed astonished to hear nothing in direct support of the common theory, and appeared to feel unable to make a reply. That minister has since embraced the doctrine here advocated.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Thus, we see, God has set life and death before us—eternal life and eternal destruction. We are called upon to choose life. We are moral beings, and therefore free agents—free to choose life, or death. Not to be thus free, we should be mere machines; and all the commands, invitations, and exhortations, as well as the warnings and threatenings of God, would be but mockery. God calls, invites, commands, expostulates, entreats, and warns; but God cannot compel a man to turn from death, without destroying man's moral agency, which would be, in fact, to *unman* man, and make him as incapable of happiness as any other mere machine. No, man must turn and live, or he will pass on and die,—die because he would not have life;—die because he is unfit for any purpose of life—wholly disqualified for the employments of life. By sin and unholiness, he is morally as incapable of answering any useful purpose in the holy service of God, as a man with some physical disease is disqualified for the active duties of this life. And the sinner, persisting in the course of sin and death, will as certainly pass the period of being restored, and when death to his soul must be the result, as a man with a fatal disorder will certainly, by neglecting proper medical aid, pass the period when death can be arrested. And if you would think the man unwise, and acting insanely, that procrastinates, and puts off application to a proper remedy in

such a physical disorder, how much more is every careless and dying sinner chargeable with folly and madness, who delays applying to Christ, the soul's Physician ! Every day increases the danger ; and every day the moral disease is increasing in malignity—every day is bringing the sinner nearer to that point, which, when once past, there is no recovery—destruction and death must follow.

Let none, then, delay any longer : — God is now calling —“look unto me and live.” The Lord Jesus Christ is stretching forth his hands, and saying,—“This is that bread which came down from heaven, that a man might eat thereof and not die.” “Whosoever drinketh the water that I shall give him”—it “shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Men, for the health of their bodies, will travel far, visit mineral springs, pay immense sums of money, and feel they are bound to do it, to prolong life, and restore health. Shall they not take as much pains about, and care of their souls, which may have eternal life,—soul and body glorified together, and made immortal, but which are now dying—perishing—hastening to utter destruction ?

I beseech you, my dying fellow men, hasten to Christ, who only has eternal life to give—believe in him, and trust in his power and skill to make alive ; abide by his directions—follow him. Remember no man can come to the Father but by Christ. There is no other way of salvation or eternal life, but by the Son of God alone. All other physicians and remedies are of no value. If you stay away you die. O, come to Christ and live.

FIFTH DISCOURSE.

“These were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so.”—Acts xvii. 11.

Paul and Silas were persecuted at Thessalonica, for the doctrine they preached, and had to leave that place. The Thessalonians seemed to think it was no matter what Scrip-

ture proof the Apostles could present in defence of their position ; that question they would not examine. It was enough for them to know it was turning "the world upside down," bringing something to their ears that differed from their long established ways of thinking ; that was not to be endured at all ; hence what they lacked in reason and argument, they made up in contempt of these disturbers of the established order that existed among them ; and they rejected the Apostles without giving the subject an examination. Not so the Bereans—they first heard—then examined the Scriptures to see whether what they heard was in accordance with the sure rule and test by which all theories are to be tried. They did not go to their creeds—articles of faith—nor doctors even, but to the Scriptures themselves,—and this they did "daily." No wonder inspiration should call them "noble." They manifested a noble and praiseworthy spirit : and it is left on record for our learning. Happy are we, if we act on the same principles.

No man is worthy the name of a minister of Jesus Christ who asks his hearers to receive what he says for truth, without being satisfied, by a personal study of the Scriptures, that it is truth.

With these remarks, I now proceed to a further examination of objections to the theory that the finally impenitent will be utterly destroyed, or rooted out of the universe of God.

FURTHER OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

It is said, because "the destruction of the wicked is not so terrible as interminable existence in misery, that therefore it does not present an adequate motive for repentance, but diminishes the proper restraints of sin."

I have already answered, in part, this objection ; but, I would here inquire—does not the threatening of the loss of all the glory of immortality, and enduring torments which shall result in the total extermination of soul and body, present a sufficient appeal to the fears of men, if they can be moved by that principle at all ? If the loss of all the glorious displays of God's wisdom, power, and love, that will be eternally unfolding, in eternal life, together with the ac-

tual sufferings and torments the sinner will endure, prior to his utter destruction, are not motives sufficient to lead to repentance, the mind must be too stupid to be moved by the idea of endless torments. Besides, we know that the greater portion of men have remained impenitent under the preaching of the theory I oppose : and I here repeat what I have before said, that I solemnly believe the natural tendency of that theory is to make men infidels instead of Christians : they cannot credit it ; and, thinking that it is taught in the Bible, they reject revelation altogether.

Another objection, it may be proper I should here notice, is, it is said, upon the theory I advocate, " The punishment God has threatened is, that he will put an end to the miseries of the wicked." I answer—It is no such thing. It is not that he will put an end to their miseries, but to their being, and of course, to all hope of life and happiness. That an end of conscious misery is necessarily implied, I admit ; but that is no part of the threatening. Let the objector apply his argument to the law which says, the man who commits murder shall die ; i. e. says the objector, the law threatens to put an end to the murderer's remorse and misery !

I have already noticed that one of the arguments that the soul is immortal is, that all men desire immortality. Yet the same persons tell us, that some men had much rather die than to have the very thing they desire, viz. immortality. That men do desire immortality I have not denied ; but if they do, they cannot at the same time desire death. Man loves life, and prefers it to death. " All that a man hath will he give for his life," is a truth, though uttered by Satan. Men at present can be but little affected by the common theory of endless being in misery, because, it is utterly impossible for any finite mind to have any clear idea of such a punishment. Destruction of being, or death, is something that strikes the senses, and reaches the understandings of men, and must therefore have more present influence on men's minds, in leading them to forsake sin, than that of which they can have no clear conceptions.

Besides, so long as you allow that man's being is eternal,

you cannot divest his mind of the idea, though it may be secretly indulged, that somehow he shall escape from that punishment ; even though he cannot at present give any definite idea how it is to be done. Hence multitudes plunge into the doctrine of restorationism.

Some tell us that "spiritual death is the penalty of the law." I answer, the phrase "*spiritual* death" is not found in the Bible ; and in the manner it is usually employed, I am satisfied it tends rather to *confusion* in the mind than the conveying of any definite idea. It is intended, I suppose, to convey the sentiment that impenitent men are unholy, and have no rational conceptions of God, and the things of God. But this sentiment is capable of being expressed in language less obscure and equivocal. Men are said, in Bible language, to be unholy, sensual, carnally-minded, not having the knowledge of God, earthly, devilish, lovers of their own selves, proud, lovers of the world, hateful, and hating one another, &c. &c.

All these expressions are sufficiently definite to be understood ; but "spiritual death," if it means anything, signifies something analogous to the death of the body. By bodily death, if I may employ that expression, we mean that the body ceases all action, sense, and life. Then, if spiritual death is analogous, it must mean that the spirit ceases all action, sense, and life. In that sense, I have no objection to admitting that *it is* the penalty of the law. That penalty is not *yet* inflicted however. But if the term is employed in any other sense to signify the penalty of the law, I demand the proof. Where is it ? *Where ?*

If it be said, "the death threatened to Adam must be a spiritual death, as it was to take place in the *day* he eat the forbidden fruit," I reply, if the penalty was spiritual death, in the sense the objector means, and if the penalty, as he understands it, was executed in the literal day that Adam eat that fruit, then the death of the body and the "wrath to come" was no part of the penalty, as neither of those events took place till nearly a thousand years after.

The penalty was not, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die ;" but as the Hebrew language has it—"dying thou shalt die." That very day the promise of immor-

tality was withdrawn, by man's being cut off from the tree of life; and the whole man commenced dying. The existence of man from that hour became one of pain, sorrow, misery, and is hastening to its wind up, and will result in the utter extermination of his being, unless counteracted by eating "that bread that came down from heaven, that a man might eat thereof and not die." Christ is that "tree of life whose fruit is for the healing of the nations." "God has given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," and abiding on him must result in death; for that is the unalterable wages of sin throughout the universe of God; as certainly so *after* the resurrection as before; for some shall come forth to the resurrection of damnation, *i. e.*, condemnation to the second death.

Let us examine this point a little further, *i. e.*, the idea that the penalty of the law of God is spiritual death. Turn to the account of man's creation, and the prohibition given him.

"The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul."

Did God address this "living soul," when he said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"—or, "in *dying* thou shalt die? To say otherwise would be an absurdity.

To maintain that the death threatened was spiritual death, 't appears to me is to confound man's sin with his punishment; if by spiritual death is meant, man became insensible to his obligation to his Maker, and to his own condition as a sinner, and lost all disposition to obey God; and that, I suppose, is what is meant by it. Strange penalty that. What would you think on reading the law which says, "For murder a man shall die," if some person should tell you it did not mean that the murderer should "be hung by the neck till he is dead," but that when he has committed the act of murder, he should immediately become *insensible* to his obligation to regard lawful authority, and to his own condition as a murderer, and lose all disposition to obey

any law? Would you not think such an interpretation of law was "murdering the king's English?" and would you not also think that the man's insensibility and want of disposition to obey any law, was an additional circumstance in his guilt, instead of being his punishment?

This insensibility to God and his claims upon us, is our sin and not our punishment, nor the penalty of God's law. To represent it in that light, is to furnish sinners with a perfect excuse for living in insensibility to God's claims upon them. If this state of spiritual death, as it is called, is the punishment of sin, or the penalty of the law, what man is *now* to blame for remaining in it?

The fact is, this insensibility to God, and his claims upon us, is an aggravation of our sin, and not the penalty of the law. The Bible represents this state as a high crime. "Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider; O that they had hearkened unto me," &c. Why all this complaint, if insensibility or spiritual death is the penalty or punishment that God has inflicted on men for sin? Did God complain of men for not escaping out of his hands, and so avoiding the punishment? As well might the government complain of the murderer for not slipping the noose of his halter when hanging by his neck, on the supposition that spiritual death is the punishment inflicted for sin. Let no man comfort his soul with that delusive idea. Depend upon it, our insensibility is a most horrid sin. Let the Almighty himself speak to such souls; and what is his language to them? "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver." Psa. 50 : 22.

Some tell us, that by the destruction of the wicked is meant the destruction of their sins; and others, the destruction of happiness. What ground have either of these classes of persons for their assertions? The destruction of sin, of happiness, of being, are entirely distinct ideas; though the latter involves the others, yet each is capable of being expressed in appropriate language. With respect to the latter, I know of no way in which it could be more appropriately or clearly set forth than it is by our Lord, in Matt. 10 : 28—"Fear him which is able to destroy both

soul and body in hell." Compare this with the expression of the apostle—"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord," and with Ps. 92 : 7—"The wicked shall be destroyed for ever." What testimony could be more explicit, that those who obey not the gospel are to be punished with destruction of *being*, and not of their *sins* or *happiness* merely.

One other objection I will here notice from the Bible, which was passed over in my main argument. It is founded on Daniel 12 : 2—"Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

It is said, "they must have everlasting consciousness to *feel* shame."

I reply : "Shame" signifies not only a passion felt when reputation is lost, but the "disgrace and ignominy," which follows men for bad conduct long after they have passed away, personally, from knowledge. Take the case of a traitor to his country. For example, the conduct of Arnold in the American Revolution. He is never thought of without the *shame* of his evil deeds connected with him ; and it is a shame that is everlasting—never can be wiped off, though he ceases to live on earth to be conscious of it. He may be said, truly, to be a subject of everlasting "contempt," *i. e.*, he is "despised," and "scorned" for his vile conduct, and always will be.

I see no difficulty, therefore, in the text under consideration. Here, also, as I have often remarked elsewhere, the punishment is put in opposition to life. The natural inference is, that those who do not awake to life, awake to die again.

I might remark again—the text does not say that they awake to *everlasting* shame. It says they awake to *shame*—mark that—"some to *shame*,"—and everlasting contempt. Now, so far as the argument is concerned, I care nothing about this distinction, yet if my opponent is determined to force this text to his aid, he must have no more of it than there is ; hence, I affirm, the text does not say, that the shame shall be everlasting, but only that they shall awake to shame ; and surely they must feel overwhelmed with

shame, when God shall call them from their graves ; and when they shall be condemned to death, as too vile to have a place anywhere in the universe of God ; and the contempt that will follow them will be everlasting.

There is one other text I will here notice, as it is of the same nature as the one in Daniel. John v. 28, 29, "The hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation."

Let it be observed here, that life, simply, is the reward spoken of for them that have done good ; the others come forth, but it is not to live ; for it is a resurrection to damnation, or condemnation, for, so the word signifies. The only question, then, to settle is — what is the punishment to which they are condemned ? That it is a punishment from which they never recover, I have no doubt. But is it everlasting life in misery, or death ? I think it is the latter. In connection with the words under consideration, our Saviour said, at the 24th verse, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life." This text throws light on the other, and shows that our Saviour intended to be understood, by the damnation, or condemnation of evil doers, a condemnation unto Death, not life in misery. I conceive this text, then, gives no countenance to the common theory of eternal being in undescribable torments, but shows that Death and not Life is the portion of those who have been doers of evil.

Again, it is said, by way of objection,—Your "doctrine was held by the Arians—is now held by the Unitarians—that is *Christianism*—and finally, that it is Elias Smith's doctrine."

Whether these marvellous objections are true "or not, I know not," as I never conversed with any of the above-named classes on the point, and know not that I ever read a paragraph from any of them on the subject. But suppose what the objector says is true ; it does not touch the question of the truth of this doctrine, nor at all shake my faith. We know the time was, when the grand argument

against some points of doctrine was "That's Arminianism"—"That's Calvinism"—or "That is what the Methodists hold." Such language has passed for a very good argument to frighten enslaved minds, in the absence of a better.

But I may ask, whether, in a Christian land, there ever was a sect having no truth in their theory? and whether any sect will have the pride to arrogate to themselves that *they* have *the truth*—the *whole* truth—and *nothing* but the truth? If there is such a sect, it had better repair to Rome immediately, and get confirmed for infallibility.

The fact is, truth lies scattered among all denominations; none of them have the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Some have more than others. The guilt of all sects, lies to a great extent, in that intolerant spirit, that, in point of fact, claims for itself infallibility, and harbours, to a greater or less extent, the idea that "there is no salvation out of" *their* "church;" whilst inspiration declares that "In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him."

Again, it is said, "You have gone half way to Universalism." That is, I have granted that even Universalists have some truth. They do not believe in the eternal conscious being of the wicked in torments; and I have admitted, that in this, they are right. Unhappy men!—must they be so "chased out of the world," to keep up the warfare upon them, that in all they pretend to hold for truth, they are so blinded that they have none?

I am glad in my heart, if I can approach one step towards Universalists, without sacrificing truth; for I hope thereby to gain some of them, and save their souls alive, by removing out of their hands their main argument for universal salvation: viz., that "The idea of the eternal conscious being of innumerable human beings, in undescribable torments, is irreconcilable with the perfections of God, and that therefore all men will be saved." The hearer seeing no other view of the subject, but eternal conscious being in misery, or Universalism, takes hold of the latter.

Every one, who has had anything to do with Universalists, knows this is their main fort; and here it is they always wish to meet their opposers—and their converts are

made more from the exhibition of the horribleness of the punishment, which their opposers say is to be inflicted upon the wicked, than any other, and all other arguments that they use.

If, then, I have taken this weapon from their hands, which is no where explicitly taught in the word of God, am I not better prepared to come down upon their hearts and understandings by the express declarations of the Most High, that, "The soul that sinneth it shall *die*;"—that, the wicked "Shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord;"—that they shall be "Cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the *second death*;"—that they shall be "Tormented day and night for ever and ever," i. e. while their being lasts—and that finally—they shall "utterly perish"—"be destroyed forever"—"be consumed with terrors"—"shall not see life"—be cut off forever, from all the pleasures derived from "everlasting life," because they have refused to come to Christ that they might have life.

Is there nothing awakening in all this? Nothing calculated to arouse the sinner to seek life? And the language too, is Scriptural, and less likely to objection than the *unscriptural* language of "immortal soul"—"deathless spirit"—"always dying and never dead"—"eternal conscious being in torments," &c. &c., all of which are of human invention, to say nothing of some of them being a contradiction in terms, and a flat denial of the testimony of God, that "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Totalk of a "soul *always dying* and *never dead*;" or, of "a *death that never dies*," is such an absurdity, that I wonder how it was ever believed by any man who thinks for himself. A doctrine that involves such a palpable contradiction is not to be promulgated for truth, unless we wish to bring discredit upon revelation itself. The theory I oppose has driven many thinking men into infidelity. That any man can embrace it, I cannot account for, except from the fact, that they have been early taught it, and the dread of feeling the indignation of bigoted men who think it a crime to depart from what they, or their fathers have baptized "orthodox."

Another objection to the theory I advocate, and perhaps the one that stands most in the way of its being received for truth, is, — “If this doctrine is true, why has it never been found out before?”

I do not know but it has been found out before. I lay no claim to being the discoverer of it. I am told that Samuel Bourne of Birmingham, and John Taylor of Norwich, held the same sentiments, “in substance, making due allowance for the shape and colour they have received from the peculiar mind of Mr. Storrs.” Whether that is true or not I know not, as I never saw a line of their writings that I know of. My attention was called to the subject by a small pamphlet I found in New York, some years ago. Who was its author, I do not know, as it had no name attached to it. I read it, but did not think much of it at the time. It is the only thing of the kind I ever saw before or since on the subject till lately. I suppose I felt like the objector; i. e. if this view of the subject be true, why is it that Christians and ministers have not learned it before? Nevertheless, I could not resist the impression to examine the subject for myself. I did so from time to time for several years, and conversed with ministers on the subject; for I would not *then* allow myself to speak upon it with laymen, lest I might lead them into a belief of a doctrine which I had not fully investigated, and be the means of their going astray. I studied the Bible, reading and noting down every text that spoke of, or appeared to have reference to the final destiny of wicked men. The result of my investigations and convictions I have laid before you.

The fact that a particular view of religious truth is *new*, is no proof of its incorrectness; it may be a reason why we should not embrace it without thorough investigation. How many things passed for truth in the dark ages of the church, that have since been exploded! and when they were first exposed to the light, the “innovators,” as they were called, were branded as “heretics.”

We should do well to remember that we have but just emerged from the dark ages of the church; and it would not be at all strange if we should find some “Babylonish garments” still worn by us for truth; or to speak without a

figure, we have no reason to suppose that the Reformers, as they are called, divested themselves of all the superstitions and false interpretations that had been put upon the Bible, when ignorant men were kept in awe by the supposed sanctity of the priests.

The Reformers may have done well, considering their circumstances, and the prejudices of their education : but must we sit down and quietly follow exactly in their steps, without employing the understanding and Bibles God has given us, to see if there are not things "new," as well as "old" in God's blessed word ? Our Saviour saith : "Every scribe which is instructed unto the Kingdom of God, bringeth forth out of his treasures, things new and old."

If it is a fact, in science generally, that false theories have been held for ages, may it not be so in religion ?—Since my recollection, the theory has been held, and promulgated for Bible truth, that there were "infants in hell not a span long"—and that "God made some men on purpose to show his power in their eternal torments in hell fire." Yes, and that he "*decreed* all their sins which led to the result," and sent "the gospel to some people on purpose," i. e. with the design, "to increase their damnation !" And it is within my remembrance, that a man was not considered orthodox who did not hold these views. But, I doubt, if any man now can be found who holds such sentiments ; or, if he does, will be willing to avow them.

Is it to be wondered at, then, if in an age when such shocking absurdities are but just passing away, there should be found still left a remnant of doctrine belonging to the same class ?

Benson, an eminent English minister, in a sermon on "The Future Misery of the Wicked," says, "God is present in hell, in his infinite justice and almighty wrath, as an unfathomable sea of liquid fire, where the wicked must drink an everlasting torture—the presence of God in his vengeance catters darkness and wo through the dreary regions of misery. As heaven would be no heaven if God did not there manifest his *love*, so hell would be no hell, if God did not there display his *wrath*. It is the *presence* and *agency* of God, which gives every thing virtue and efficacy, with-

out which there can be no life, no sensibility, no power." He then adds — "God is, therefore, himself present in hell, to see the punishment of these rebels against his government, that it may be adequate to the infinity of their guilt : his fiery indignation kindles, and his incensed fury feeds the flame of their torment, while his powerful presence and operation maintain their being, and render all their powers most acutely sensible ; thus setting the keenest edge upon their pain, and making it cut most intolerably deep. He will exert *all* his divine attributes to make them as wretched as the capacity of their nature will admit."

After this he goes on to describe the duration of this work of God, and calls to his aid all the stars, sand, and drops of water, and makes each one tell a million of ages : and when all those ages have rolled away, he goes over the same number again, and again, and so on forever.

And all this he brings forth with a text of Scripture that asserts the wicked "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." Such a description as here given by Mr. Benson needs no comment — it *defies comment* — no language could be employed to make a subject look more horrible than what he has used. He dwelt upon the subject, himself, till his own soul was filled with horror, and he cried out — "Believe me, my poor fellow mortal, thou canst not, *indeed thou canst not* bear this devouring fire ! Thou canst not dwell with these everlasting burnings !"

There must be some defect in a theology, it seems to me, that leads *great men* into such palpable contradictions.

Mr. Benson preached two whole sermons on these subjects, in which he scarcely produces a text of Scripture in support of his theory—they appear to be, throughout, a work of *imagination*.

I consider, to charge the infinite God with the design and determination of exerting his almighty power in holding innumerable human beings in undescribable torments, in interminable conscious being, is of the same character as the other horrible doctrines that I have named ; and is not to be believed without the clearest and most positive testimony. Such testimony the Bible does not furnish, to my

mind, and therefore, I reject such a theory as opposed to the Bible, to reason, and to common sense. The theory I advocate has one great difficulty to overcome, viz: the strong prejudice of early education, backed up by the consideration that the common theory has been so long the established faith of the church. But, even that difficulty is overbalanced by the fact, that the sympathies of our nature, and reason, are opposed to the common theory, and are towards the views I advocate, when once presented to the mind: and a spirit to examine for ourselves, instead of leaving our thinking to others, has gone forth in the earth.

If the fact that a theory has long ago been settled, and always believed by the "fathers," is a good reason for rejecting, as untrue, any other theory, then the Jews have the best reason they could desire for rejecting Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. The *Jewish Church* "long ago" decided that he was *an impostor*, and crucified him as such. The Jews of the present day, then, may say—"Our church long ago settled the point, that Jesus was not the promised Messiah; and who were better qualified to judge than they to whom the Scriptures were committed, and in whose language they were written? Besides, our *fathers* have always believed and maintained that Jesus was an impostor. Hence, we consider it a settled point."

Now, I ask, if such an argument is not quite as good and forcible, as the one used by some of my opponents, that my view must be false, because, as they suppose, the church long ago fixed on the opposite theory as true, and their fathers have always believed it? Let such persons make no more attempts to convert the Jews. Indeed, they ought to turn Jews.

Whether others see on this subject as I do or not, it is a matter of unspeakable consolation to me to believe, that the devil and all his works will be utterly destroyed; and that a universe will appear unstained by sin, misery or death.—If others believe the contrary, it will be no cause why I should disfellowship them, provided they walk in obedience to the will and word of God. The Lord, I trust, has delivered me from that spirit of bigotry which would shut out from my christian regard and fellowship any man, sim-

ply because he does not agree with me in sentiments, especially if he is striving to live a holy life, by obeying the commandments of God; "for this is the love of God that we keep his commandments"—and "he that saith he loves God and hateth his brother, is a liar and the truth is not in him."

Whether the doctrine I have advocated is true or false, matters not to me, personally, further than truth is concerned. For, by the grace of God, I intend to "fight the good fight of faith," and "lay hold on eternal life." All those that do this, I know, for the Bible declares it, will be crowned with honour, and glory, and *immortality*. Those who do not do it, will be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death.—Awful, indeed, will be their end. O, that sinners may awake to see their danger, and fly from the doom that awaits them! O, the thoughts of the anguish that a dying sinner must feel! an anguish kindled up by a sense of guilt, a sight of what, to them, is lost forever, and the curse of a violated law, which will cause them to perish, without recovery and without hope.

SIXTH DISCOURSE.

"I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made."—Isa. lvii. 16.

We are too apt to take the words of Scripture and apply them to all men indiscriminately, without regarding the character of the person spoken of. In this way we pervert the word of the Most High, and sometimes comfort those whom God has not comforted. I conceive, that has been done with the words of my text. They have been applied to all men; when the context shows, most clearly, they are spoken only of the "contrite ones," who are "humble and contrite" under the judgments, or chastisements that God had inflicted upon them for their sins: while it is expressly said, in the same connection, there is "no peace to the wicked;"—God's wrath abideth on them; and abiding on them, they will certainly "fail." The term "fail," used in

the text, though it has other significations, is, I think, generally used by the prophet Isaiah, to signify "to perish." He says, 21 : 16—"All the glory of Kedar shall fail;" And 19 : 3—"The spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof."

I consider the sense of the text, then, to be this—"With those persons who truly humble themselves, and repent, under my rebukes, I will not continue my displeasure—for if my wrath should remain upon any man, he would utterly perish, soul and spirit, as surely as I have made him."—Hence, the doctrine of the text seems to me, to be this—1st. God is the Creator of the souls and spirits of men, and of course, *can* DESTROY them. 2d. If God's wrath should continue, upon any man, without being withdrawn, it would certainly cause it to "fail"—perish; or cease to exist: he could not continue in being under it. 3. But upon those who do repent, that wrath shall not abide.

These remarks have chiefly been made to meet an objection that man is composed of three parts—body, soul and spirit; and that, though his body and soul might perish, his spirit could not. I have used the term *soul* throughout my discourses in its broadest sense as including the essence of what constitutes a man; and I am satisfied that is the general sense in which the Scriptures use it, though in some texts it is, undoubtedly, used in a more restricted sense, and refers only to that energy that gives activity to the body.

It is a matter of indifference which way it is applied in my text; for the expressions are such as to include the whole man, and to show that every man on whom the wrath of God abideth will perish—utterly perish—body, "soul and spirit."

I shall now proceed to notice one of the evils of the opposite theory; or the maintaining that such expressions as die—death—destroy—destroyed—destruction—burned up—perish, &c. are not to be understood literally, i. e. according to their obvious meaning, when spoken of the final destiny of wicked men.

ONE EVIL OF THE COMMON THEORY OF ENDLESS BEING
IN MISERY,

Is,—It sustains the mischievous practice of mystifying, or making the Scriptures to have a secret or hidden meaning, in the plainest texts.

This mischievous practice was brought into the church, almost as soon as the Apostles had left the world. The converts from heathenism seemed intent on uniting heathen philosophy with christianity. Hence they must find an abundance of mysteries in the Scriptures; and the practice of allegorizing, i. e. making the language to contain something that does not appear in the words, commenced and generally prevailed, before the third century. This was done, doubtless, with a view to lead heathen philosophers to embrace christianity, as affording them a fruitful field for their researches. But it led the church astray into the wild fields of conjecture; and every lively imagination could find hidden wonders in the Bible; while the plain literal meaning of the text was disregarded. That fatal practice increased from age to age, till the simplicity of the gospel was totally eclipsed, and the obscuraton has not wholly disappeared to this day.

This practice has given occasion to honest people, as well as to infidels to say, "You can make any thing out of the Bible," or "play any tune upon it." And this is true, if men are to be allowed to take texts which have a plain, obvious, and literal signification, and call them mystical or figurative, when there is not a clear necessity for doing so. The Scriptures themselves almost uniformly notify us when the language is to be understood figuratively; and generally, those figures are explained, and the literal interpretation given.

The common method of making the terms life and death mystical or figurative, i. e. to mean something more, and far different from what appears in the literal and obvious signification of the words, I conceive is unwarranted by the Scriptures, and tends only to throw confusion upon the plainest subjects of the Bible, and also to take away the

force and beauty of very many otherwise clear and intelligible portions of God's word.

Let me now call your attention to texts, the beauty and force of which are greatly weakened and obscured by such a course.

Look at the young man who came to our Saviour with an important inquiry, Matt. 19 : 16—What does he say ? Is it his inquiry, "What shall I do to escape endless being in misery ?" No ; but "What shall I do that I may have eternal life ?" How plain the question, on the theory I advocate, and how appropriate the answer, "If thou wilt enter into life," &c. Not—if thou wilt escape endless life in torments—not, if thou wilt have a "happy eternal life," but simply—If thou wilt enter into life. What simplicity, beauty, and force ! all is natural, and easy to be understood.

Again, John 3 : 15, 16, "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." All here, again, is natural, easy, and forcible, on the theory that the wicked are actually to die or perish if found rejecting Christ, who only has eternal life to give. But on the theory I oppose, we must have a whole sermon to explain the meaning of the term *perish*, and make it appear that it does not mean "extinction of being," but eternal life in misery ! I once heard a Doctor of Divinity in New York city preach a whole sermon on that one point ; and that, too, after he had admitted that the primary meaning of the term is "extinction of being." It seems to me it is taking quite too much pains to make obscure the meaning of a word, that of itself is easy to be understood.

In the same chapter, at the 36th verse, it is said : "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him." He is already condemned to death, and is dying ; eternal life is offered in the Son of God ; he that will not accept it, through him, shall not possess life, but the wrath of God shall abide on him to the full execution of the penalty, which is death, the wages of sin. Again, John 5 : 28, 29—"The hour is coming in which

all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation," or condemnation: but to what? not to eternal life in misery, but to death—the second death, for that is the wages sin has earned. Here the language is natural and forcible, on the view I advocate, and the contrast of life and death is perfect; but I ask any candid man if it is so on the view I oppose?

Again, at the 39th and 40th verses: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they that testify of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

They were looking not for eternal happiness merely, or an escape from eternal misery, but simply for eternal life. Yet, when the only physician who could give that priceless blessing calls them to come to him for it, they would not come; and, as a matter of course, their souls are not saved "from death." Look at the following texts, in the 6th chapter of John. "Labour for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life." "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." "I am the bread of life." "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life." "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." "I am the bread of life." "This is that bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die." "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." "The words I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

That simple life and death are put in opposition, or clearly implied in these texts, is too plain not to be seen by any person of common attention. "NOT DIE,"—"ETERNAL LIFE." Now, a man shall "not die," if the theory I oppose is true, whether he come to Christ or not; and it would have been just as easy to have expressed the doctrine of eternal being in misery by unequivocal language, as in that, the literal interpretation of which must necessarily lead astray, if that doctrine be true.

Again, John 8 : 12, "He that followeth me shall have the light of life." And at the 51st verse, "If a man keep my sayings he shall never see death." Again, in 10th chapter, "I am come that they might have life." "My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me ; and I give unto them eternal life—and they shall never perish," &c. Does not this language clearly imply, that those who do not follow Christ will perish ? Yes, says the objector, their happiness will perish ! But I ask, if such an interpretation is not forced and unnatural ? Our Saviour says no such thing. *Perish* is put in opposition to *life*. By the simple and natural meaning of the terms, there is great beauty and force in the language. Besides, to admit of a departure from the literal meaning of the term *perish*, throws us into the regions of uncertainty ; and if one man may say it means his happiness shall perish, another may say it means his sins shall perish, and so on. But if it signifies simply what the word imports, a destruction of being, then his happiness and his sins perish with him, as a matter of course, and there is no obscurity about it.

Again, the 11th chapter, 25th and 26th verses—"I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." How forcible and full of power are those words, literally understood ! But say, to die, means loss of happiness, though the person has conscious being, or life, and you at once strip the expression of our Lord of the energy which it possesses in its plain and obvious meaning.

Again—"I am the way, the truth, and the life : no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Again, Rom. 5 : 17—"If by one man's offence, death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ ; therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, (i. e. unto death ;) even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men, (i. e. in its offer,) unto justification of life ;" "That as sin hath reigned unto death," (i. e. unto

condemnation to death,) "even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Again, in the 6th chapter, 13th verse—"Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead." Now look at such expressions as the following : "The crown of life,"—"The word of life,"—"the grace of life,"—"He that hath the Son hath life—he that hath not the Son of God hath not life,"—"The water of life,"—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life,"—"This do and thou shalt live,"—"Because I live ye shall live also,"—"We shall also live with him,"—"Be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live,"—"God sent his Son, that we might live through him,"—"If one died for all, then were all dead," (i. e., dying, doomed to die ; as the body is dead, because of sin, i. e., doomed to die, though not yet actually dead.) "Who died for us, that we should live together with him." These, and a multitude of other texts of Scripture, all speak in plain and unequivocal language, if the view I take of the final destiny of the wicked is correct ; otherwise, and if figurative, the imagination must be employed to explain them ; and then we find ourselves let loose in the wild fields of fancy ; and who shall decide where we shall stop ?

WHAT MAN LOST BY THE FALL ; OR, A SHORT DISSERTATION ON NATIVE DEPRAVITY.

In my discourse on the inquiry, Are the wicked immortal ? I have endeavoured to show that man, by the fall, lost all title to immortality ; and had it not been for the "seed of the woman," he would have utterly perished, or ceased to be, as though he never had been. There is not a particle of evidence that the original threatening embraced eternal life in misery ; and that idea has puzzled our greatest and most learned divines, to tell how an atonement could be made adequate to redeem man from such a punishment. To meet the case, they have gone to the idea that God, himself, suffered to make the necessary atonement ; and then they have started back from that position, as being im-

possible that the Godhead could actually suffer, and so have substituted the "human body and soul" of Jesus Christ, as united with the Godhead, the human nature only suffering. This has led others to deny an atonement altogether, as they have contended that the man Christ Jesus, while the Godhead did not suffer, could not, by any sufferings he might endure, give an equivalent for endless torments in the fire of hell. Pressed with this difficulty, the advocates of the endless being in torments, have been led to say, it was not necessary to an atonement that the sufferer should endure the very same punishment that the guilty were liable to, but only such as should show that God would not let sin go unpunished. Others have taken advantage of this admission to deny the necessity of an atonement at all, and hence have opposed the idea of an atonement. This has resulted in a still further departure from what I think to be truth, and they have taken the position, that if man suffers for his sins, himself, that is all-sufficient; and that his sufferings are bounded by this life, or at most, to a very limited period in a future state, after which he will have an eternity of happiness.

Now, all this confusion and conjecture, for I can give it no higher name, I conceive, arises from not clearly understanding what man lost by the fall, for himself and posterity. Man lost for himself, it is true, holiness and happiness, as well as immortality. But for his posterity, in my judgment, there is not a particle of evidence, in the whole Bible, that he lost any thing but immortality. Doctors of Divinity have puzzled their own brains, and those of students in theology, with laboured efforts to find out what infants need to have done for them, and how God does it, to fit them for heaven. Long and laboured arguments and inquiries have been entered into about the depravity of infants—how they are justified—how they are made holy—and whether all of them go to heaven, or part to hell, &c. &c. The whole of these discussions have only served to make darkness darker. The truth, I conceive, is very simple, and that, perhaps, is the reason why great men overlook it. It is simply this—Adam lost immortality—and therefore could not communicate it to his posterity, any more than an im-

poverished parent could communicate riches to his children ; the consequence is, all his posterity are born, not liable to eternal conscious being in misery, but liable to perish, to lose all life, sense and being ; and what they need, previous to personal sins, is simply salvation from perishing, or they need immortality, eternal life.

Hence, all God does, and all that is necessary to be done to any soul, before personal transgression, is to have eternal life, or immortality, given to soul and body. This God gives to all infants who die in infancy, "for of such is the kingdom of God ;" and the "gift of God is eternal life"—but this gift is "through Jesus Christ our Lord." We see, then, from what Christ redeems little children ; it is from death, or from perishing, not from eternal life in misery, for they were not exposed to that, and, hence, needed no redemption from it.

This view of the subject relieves the mind from the fog and confusion thrown over us by the common theory of total depravity, and which has so long puzzled theologians as well as common people, and rent the churches with controversy.

Christ redeemed man from death, or that loss of being to which he was exposed, and opened eternal life to all ; or, he "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light." But that eternal life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ. He gives it to all who die in infancy, without requiring any thing to be done on their part ; for this plain reason,—they were incapable of doing any thing, and God requires no improvement of what he has never given.

But with respect to those who have come to years of understanding, the case is different. They are required to *act faith* in the *truths* revealed to their minds under whatever dispensation they may live. Hence under the Gospel, we are required to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, as he that "came down from heaven" to give "life unto the world." This is the great test question ; because he that truly receives Christ, receives all the other truths connected with his mission to earth ; not only so, but he manifests that faith by obedience ; so that a true faith is as certainly known by the conduct and conversation, as a living man is known from a dead carcass. And for a man to pretend that he has

faith in Christ, while he does not walk in obedience to all the known commands of God, is as absurd as to say, that the body without the spirit is alive ; or, that a sick man has faith in a physician whom he refuses to employ, and whose directions he will not follow.

I conceive, all the "evil nature," about which there has been so much discussion in the world, that man inherits from Adam, is a dying nature ; the entire man perishing. Christ came, that man "might not perish, but have everlasting life : " adults by believing in him ; i. e., receive him as the heaven-appointed dispenser of life. And he that will not thus come to Christ, will not have life, but will perish forever ;—and perish too under an insupportable weight of guilt for having rejected life ; preferring the pleasures of sin, or the things of time and sense, to the enjoyment of eternal life. They have their choice—they chose their good things in this world, and when they leave it, they are reserved unto the judgment to be tried and punished.

They have passed the bounds where that life might have been secured ; and there remains for them, now, nothing but "a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour" [as the word means, "to eat up"—"destroy"—"to annihilate,"] "the adversaries."

I had no intention, at this time, of going into a long and laboured argument on the subject of depravity. I designed only to throw out a few thoughts to show you the bearing of the subject I have had so long under discussion, on other points of doctrine that have been considered obscure and difficult, and which have cost immense labour to the learned to make plain to common minds, and which, after all that has been said and written, have remained obscure.

Now if the view I have taken, with regard to man's exposedness to perish, to die, i. e., to lose all life, sense, and being, is true, I appeal to the understanding of all, if it does not at once make plain the long obscure subject of "inherent depravity ?" What is it ? Why simply this—Every child of Adam inherits a perishing, dying nature, i. e., soul and body both are perishing, or have no principle of immortality in them. Adam could communicate no other, as he lost immortality, i. e., his title to it, the day he sinned, and could only regain it for himself, personally, by a personal act of faith : but

that act of faith did not make immortality inherent in him, that being in Christ alone, and of course, the whole of Adam, separate from Christ, and by natural tendency, was dying, perishing, tending to utter destruction of being. This being the case, he could communicate no other nature to his posterity. By Adam, therefore, "all were dead;" i. e., the natural tendency of all born of him was to perish, in the sense of ceasing to be. Christ "died for all;" first, that all who leave this world in infancy, or prior to personal transgression, might have eternal life, and not perish. How glorious does this view of the subject make Christ appear in his relation to little children! No wonder he took them in his arms and blessed them, and said—"Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And eternally, in glory, will those who die in infancy praise him who redeemed them from death—and saved them from perishing.

Second—Christ died for all, "that whosoever believeth in him (i. e. who are capable of the exercise of faith,) "might not perish, but have everlasting life." Adults then pass from death, i. e., from condemnation to death, unto life, through, or by faith in Christ—and thus are said to be born again; as that which is born of the flesh, i. e., of corruptible, perishing man, is flesh—perishing, corruptible, like him from whom he sprung; so, that which is born of the spirit, i. e., of the spiritual, living Adam, Christ, is spirit, is alive; or, hath eternal life; according to the Scripture which saith, "he that hath the Son hath life," whilst "he that hath not the Son hath not life."

If I mistake not, then, the true state of the case is this.—All men, in consequence of being the offspring of Adam, are destitute of immortality; God has given his Son Jesus Christ, to die for us, that we might not perish, except by our own fault. He takes care to give eternal life to all who are incapable of choosing it for themselves. Those who are capable of making the choice, he sets "life and death before" them, and calls upon them to "choose life," that they "may live;"—if they will not come to Christ that they may have life, they pass on and perish, but they perish under an insupportable load of guilt and shame, for having preferred the things of this life to *eternal life*.

APPENDIX.

THE notion that there is life in the soul of the wicked, or a principle that cannot die, was taken from the Platonic Philosophers, and was introduced into the Church, as a Scripture doctrine, in the third century.

Mosheim, in his Ecclesiastical History, Vol. I. p. 86, says:—"Its first promoters argued from that known doctrine of the Platonic School, which was also adopted by Origen and his disciples, *that the divine nature was diffused through all human souls; or in other words, that the faculty of reason, from which proceed the health and vigour of the mind, was an emanation from God into the human soul, and comprehended in it the principles and elements of all truth human and divine.*"

Such, I conceive, is the true origin of the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul. It originated in heathen philosophy, and was grafted on to Christianity to its immense injury. No wonder Paul, Col. 2 : 8, said—"Beware lest any man spoil you through PHILOSOPHY and vain deceit, after the *Traditions* of men, after the *rudiments* of this world, and not after Christ."

The Psalmist says, 37th Psa. 20th verse: "The wicked shall *perish*, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall *consume*; into SMOKE shall they *consume away*." Compare this with Isa. 41 : 11, 12: "Behold all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded; they shall be as *nothing*; and they that strive with thee shall *perish*. Thou shalt seek them, and *shalt not find them*, even them that contended with thee; they that war against thee shall be as *nothing*, and as A THING OF NOUGHT." Compare this with Psa. 92 : 7: "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that *they shall be DESTROYED FOR EVER*." In view of this truth the Psalmist said, 104th Psa. 35th verse: "Let the sinners [literally, *the sinners shall*] be *consumed* out of the earth, and let the wicked [literally, *the wicked shall*] be NO MORE." In view of such a result, he cries out—"Bless the LORD, O my soul. Praise the LORD."

The proof from such texts is too positive, in my mind, to admit of a doubt but that the wicked will *die—cease to have existence*, after their resurrection. Then they will experience the "*second death*," and be found "NO MORE AT ALL."

No. 1.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE,

OR, STATE OF THE DEAD FROM DEATH TO THE
RESURRECTION.

By George Storrs.

I consider the intermediate state of the dead to be a topic of some importance, as upon a proper understanding of this subject depends, in a great measure, correct views of the resurrection of the dead; for, it must be manifest that if only a *part* of man dies, there can be no resurrection of *man*, only in part; but, do the Scriptures countenance any other idea than that *the whole man* is raised from the dead?

First, then—Let us inquire what is death?

MILTON, the author of “Paradise Lost,” says: “The common definition which supposes it to consist in the separation of soul and body, is inadmissible. For,” he inquires, “what part of man is it that dies when this separation takes place? Is it the soul? This will not be admitted by the supporters of the above definition. Is it then the body? But how can that be said to die which never had any life in itself? Therefore,” he adds, “the separation of soul and body cannot be called the death of man.”

But we can hardly approach this subject without the cry of *heresy* or *infidelity* being raised. — In the same way the Pope might have kept the Reformers in eternal silence, if they had feared his denunciations. Allow me to give another extract from Milton on the above subject. He inquires: —

“Is it the whole man, or the body alone that is deprived of vitality?” He adds—“As this is a subject which may be discussed *without endangering our faith or devotion*, whichever side of the controversy we espouse, I shall freely declare what seems to me the true doctrine, as collected from numberless passages of Scripture, without regarding the opinion of those who think that truth is to be sought in the schools of philosophy, rather than in the sacred writings.’ See *Milton’s Treatise on Christian Doctrines*.

This work of Milton's I never saw till lately. I am so much pleased with his views on this subject that the reader will excuse me if I occasionally make an extract from him; and I feel the more inclined to do it because I have been denounced as an infidel for holding sentiments, on the subject, which I now find were held by one whom multitudes of Christians have delighted to honour.

I shall endeavour to show, from the Scriptures of truth, that the *whole man*, whatever are his component parts, suffers privation of life, in what we call death.

Turn to the account of man's creation, Gen. 2: 7. "And the Lord God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." God said to this man, this "living soul," without excepting any part of him, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Or, as the margin reads, "*Dying* THOU shalt die." What part of man is excepted in this denunciation? Surely no part. To say, the *mind*, which was principal in the offence, was exempt from death is an absurdity; or, to make its death to be no more than a state of unhappiness, in my judgment, is doing violence to the testimony of God. That unhappiness was involved, as a consequence of sin, is admitted; but, that that was the *penalty* for transgression is denied. The penalty is *death*. In explaining the penalty God himself says to man, Gen. 3: 19, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the *ground*; 'or out of it wast THOU taken: for dust thou art, and *unto lust* shalt thou return." Compare this with Job 7: 21, "For now shall I *sleep in the dust*," &c. And the angel says to Daniel, chap. 12: 2, "Many of them that *sleep in the dust of the earth* shall awake," &c. It was to the *whole man* that his Maker said, "Dying thou shalt die;" and at death there is a cessation of all consciousness, as truly as that man had no consciousness before his creation: if it were not so it would not be death, but only a change in the mode of man's life. But we will proceed in the Scripture testimony.

The doctrine that the whole man sunk in death was held by the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles. Jacob says, Gen. 37: 35, "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." Job 3: 12-19, says, "Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck? For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have *slept*: then had I been at rest, with kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves; or with

princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver : or as a hidden untimely birth I *had not been*; as infants which never saw light. There the wicked cease from troubling ; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together ; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there ; and the servant is free from his master." Also Job 14 : 10-12, "But man dieth, and wasteth away ; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he ? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up : So *man* lieth down, and riseth not : till the heavens be no more, they shall *not awake*, nor be raised out of *their sleep*." See chap. 17 : 13, "If I wait, the grave is mine house ;" also 16th verse, "They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is *in the dust*." David deprecates the approach of death—and why, if he is going at once into the presence of God ? For he himself tells us, in God's "presence is *fulness* of joy ;" and yet he speaks in the following strains, Ps. 6 : 5, "For in death there is no remembrance of thee : in the grave who shall give thee thanks ?" Again, Psa. 88 : 10-12, "Wilt thou show wonders to the dead ? shall the dead arise and praise thee ? Selah. Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave ? or thy faithfulness in destruction ? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark ? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness ?" Surely this is strong language ; but again he says, Psa. 115 : 17, "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." Surely such language as this cannot be consistent with the common theory in regard to the state of the dead. And that David was not mistaken, Peter affirms in Acts 2 : 34, "For David is *not* ascended into the heavens." Now David could not, it seems to me, so earnestly desire to live longer on the earth if he believed the moment of his death would put him in possession of the immediate presence and glory of God ; and besides, he declares, Psa. 17 : 15, "I shall be satisfied when I *awake* in thy likeness." Now if this was *before* the resurrection, then David would be satisfied without a resurrection : if it was not till *after* the resurrection, then David would be in the presence of God, where "is fulness of joy," and yet not be satisfied, because he had not yet had his resurrection : i. e. he could have fulness of joy and not be satisfied, if the common notion of the consciousness of the dead be true.

Hezekiah says, Isa. 38 : 18, 19, "For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee ; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day." Surely if

men go immediately to heaven, who die in the Lord, Hezekiah could have praised the Lord in "nobler strains" to be dead than alive; but he evidently did not understand the doctrine of souls living while their bodies were dead.

Our Lord told his disciples, John 14 : 3, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Christ does not come again at death. This is evident from John 21 : 22, 23, "Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die: but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" Here it is clear that the disciples understood that those to whom the Lord should *come* would not die; and hence they did not believe that the Lord comes at a man's death. Our Lord then, in the text, 14th chap., spoke of his coming at the resurrection, to receive his people; at which time they will "see him as he is" and "be like him;" 1 John 3 : 2. Surely they will not be "*like him*" till they have their resurrection bodies; or, till their "vile body" is "fashioned like unto his glorious body." Phil. 3 : 21. Again, 1 Corin. 15 : 32, Paul says—"If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die." That is, die altogether; for, if that is not the meaning, there is no force in what he says. He evidently makes our entire future existence to depend on the resurrection of the dead. His reasoning, in the remaining part of that chapter, is entirely on the supposition that there are only two states—the *corruptible* and the *incorruptible*—death and the resurrection; not a word does he hint of an intermediate state of consciousness. Not only so, but Paul declares, 2 Timothy 4 : 8, that he does not expect his "crown of righteousness" till the day of Christ's "appearing;" which day, he tells us, in the same connection, 1st verse, is when our Lord shall come to "judge the quick and the dead."

That the soul and spirit die, or cease to have consciousness with the body, may be further proved from such texts as the following: 1 Cor. 5 : 5, "That the *spirit* may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus:" not in the day of death, but "in the day of the Lord." Job 33 : 18, "He keepeth back his *soul* from the pit." Psal. 22 : 20, "Deliver my *soul* from the sword." Psal. 78 : 50, "He spared not their *soul* from death." Psal. 89 : 48, "Shall he deliver his *soul* from the hand of the grave." Psal. 94 : 17, "Un-

less the Lord had been my help, my *soul* had quickly [margin] dwelt *in silence*." Isaiah 38 : 17, "Thou hast, in love to my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption."—Ezek. 18 : 20, "*The soul that sinneth it shall die*."

The soul of our Lord Jesus Christ was, for a short time, subject to death for our sins. Compare Ps. 16 : 10, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [grave]; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption," with Acts 2 : 31—David "seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell [the grave], neither his flesh did see corruption." Peter adds, "This *Jesus* hath God raised up."—Not his body merely, but "*this Jesus*" himself. And our Lord himself says, Matt. 26 : 38, "*My soul* is exceeding sorrowful, even unto *death*."—Yea, "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures"—Yea, God made "*HIS SOUL* an offering for sin." See 1 Corin. 15 : 3, and Isa. 53 : 10.

By overlooking the true Scriptural doctrine of death, teachers of religion have bewildered themselves and others in endless speculations as to the nature of Christ's sufferings, and *how* those sufferings could be an atonement for sin : and they have speculated till they have driven many into an entire denial of Christ's dying for us.—Our Lord Jesus experienced the very same death that Adam and his posterity were subject to in consequence of the original apostacy of man.—Adam and his posterity by *necessity*, as a punishment for sin—Christ *voluntarily*, "that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance;" Heb. 9 : 15, which promised inheritance is "eternal life;" for, "this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son," 1 John 5 : 11; who, by his death and resurrection, "hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light;" both of which, [life and immortality], by death, were hid from man's sight : but Christ was manifest in the flesh "that through death he might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is the devil : and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Heb. 2 : 14, 15.

The Scriptures do not make death a deliverer, as it would be, if the saints go immediately into the presence of God, but they uniformly point us to the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. Saith our Saviour, John 5 : 28, 29, "The hour is coming, in the which *all* that are in the graves" [not in heaven or hell, but in *their graves*] "shall hear his voice and come forth," &c. "In this passage,"

says Milton, "those who hear, those who come forth, are all described as being in the graves, the righteous as well as the wicked."

Again, 1 Corinth. 15 : 52, "The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised." These dead, Paul had previously told us, are they that *sleep* in Jesus ; v. 18. "In such a sleep," says Milton, "I should suppose Lazarus to have been lying, if it were asked whither his soul betook itself during those four days of death. The words of Christ themselves," he adds, "lead to this conclusion : John 11 : 11, 13, 'our friend Lazarus sleepeth ; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep : howbeit Jesus spake of his death ;' which death, if the miracle were true, must have been real. This," Milton continues, "is confirmed by the circumstances of Christ's raising him ; v. 43 ; 'he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.' If the soul of Lazarus, that is, if Lazarus himself was not within the grave, why did Christ call on the lifeless body which could not hear ? If it were the soul he addressed, why did he call it from a place where it was not ? Had he intended to intimate that the soul was separated from the body, he would have directed his eyes to the quarter whence the soul of Lazarus might be expected to return,—namely, from heaven : for to call from the grave what is not there, is like seeking the living among the dead, which the angel reprehended as ignorance among the disciples, Luke 24 : 5."

With one more extract from Milton I will close this part of the subject, and then take up more fully objections. On 1 Pet. 3 : 19, "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison," Milton says, "literally, *in guard*, or, as the Syriac version renders it, *in sepulchres, in the grave*, which means the same ; for the grave is the common guardian of all till the day of judgment. What therefore the apostle says more fully, chap. 4 : 5, 6, 'who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead ; for, for this cause *was* the gospel preached also to them that are dead,' he expresses it in this place by a metaphor, 'the spirits that are in guard ;' it follows therefore that the spirits are dead."

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

1. It is said—Our Lord told the thief "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

If by *to-day* we are to understand that *literal day* that our Lord hung upon the cross, it is not so easy to prove that it took place, from the fact that three days afterwards the "same Jesus" told Mary, John 20 : 17 ; "I am *not yet*

ascended to my Father." So, *then*, the thief could not have been in paradise with Christ before our Lord himself had ascended. But if by *to-day* is only to be understood *quickly*, or in a short time, it may be answered, that at Jesus' resurrection "many of the saints that slept arose, and *came out* of their graves after his [Christ's] resurrection." Christ was the "first born from the dead among *many brethren*." See Col. 1: 18, and Rom. 8: 29. Thus the promise of Christ was fulfilled to the thief, if he was among those who arose with the Saviour.

But again. The punctuation in our Bibles is not inspiration, but the work of men. Then this text may be read thus; "Verily, I say unto thee to-day; Thou *shalt* be with me in paradise." Or, as some of the Greek copies of the New Testament read the thief's prayer—"Lord, remember me in *the day of thy coming*." The answer then is—Verily, I say unto thee, this day [i. e. this day of Christ's coming, of which the thief had spoken] thou shalt be with me in paradise.

It was an assurance to the thief that his prayer was accepted; and that in the day that our Lord should come into his kingdom the supplicant should have a part in it.

2. It is said—"Paul desired to depart and be with Christ, &c.; and therefore, he must have believed in the conscious state of those who have left the body." But we will let Paul explain himself. He says, Phil. 1: 23—"I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." Compare this with 2 Cor. 5: 1 to 8—"For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were *dissolved*, we have a building of God, an *house not made with hands*, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be *clothed upon* with our house which is from heaven; if so be that being *clothed* we shall not be *found naked*; for we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: *not* for that we would be *unclothed*, but *clothed upon*, that MORTALITY might be swallowed up of LIFE."

Here the apostle shows, that his desire was not to be *unclothed*, or to be a "disembodied spirit," but to be clothed *upon* with his house from heaven; for, "this *mortal* shall *put on immortality*, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Now, it was for this the apostle waited; and that was what he *desired*, as may further be seen by Rom. 8: 23,—"*We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our BODY*." From all this, it appears to me, it is evident that Paul's desire was to be

absent from the *mortal* body and to be present with the Lord, not in an unclothed state, but in his heavenly, or *immortal* body. This state the apostle did not expect till the *appearing* of Christ, as is evident from 2 Timothy 4 : 8,—“There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge, shall give me at *that day*: and not to me only, but unto *all* them also that love his *appearing*.” All the saints are to have their *crowns* at the Lord’s appearing.

3. It is said—“Moses and Elias appeared with our Lord at his transfiguration, and therefore they must have been in a conscious state.” That I admit. Elijah was translated and did not die. As to Moses, it seems likely that he was raised from the dead, from the consideration that Jude tells us, 9th verse, that Michael had a dispute, about the body of Moses, with the devil. Now what was that dispute ! My opinion is this : The devil had no clear idea of the resurrection, and supposed that all the human family that he could bring under the power of death had perished for ever. Up to the time of Moses, one only, *viz.* Enoch, had escaped death. Satan, in his own estimation, had proved thus far a most triumphant conqueror. He saw Moses, like Enoch, walking with God, and doubtless expected that he too would be translated, that he should not see death ; but Moses committed a trespass at the waters of Meribah, and the Lord told him he should *die*. What malicious joy must have filled the devil’s heart when he heard that Moses was to die ! such a triumph Satan had hardly anticipated. Next Satan sees of Moses he stands in the presence of God. As he had no knowledge of the resurrection, how natural in his “*contention*” with Michael, would it be for the devil to accuse God with falsehood ! As though he should say — “God said Moses should die, but he did not, for there he stands in the presence of God.” Michael did not inform the adversary that Moses had been raised from the dead, but simply said, “The Lord rebuke thee.”

That Moses was raised from the dead is strongly probable, from the fact that he was an eminent type of Christ. See Deut. 18 : 15, 18 — “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet—*like unto me*,” &c. The probability that Moses was raised from the dead is quite as strong as the conjecture of our commentators, that the devil wanted to find the body of Moses, to lead the Israelites into idolatry with it, and hence disputed with Michael about it.

If my view is correct, Moses, though he died, was raised from the dead, and hence at the transfiguration the kingdom of God was presented in *miniature*; Christ in his glory—

Elias, the representative of all that will be changed *without dying*, and Moses, the representative of all that sleep in death.

If it still be urged against this view that the apostle says, Col. 1: 18, that Christ is "the first born from the dead," I answer, first — He is the first born from the dead in an eminent sense; that is, upon the *certainty* of his resurrection depended the resurrection of all men: if he, therefore, were not raised, none of the dead ever would have been, or ever will be. This is the apostle's argument throughout the 15th chap. of 1st Corinth.

Again; it is not true, in an *absolute* sense, that Christ was the first born from the dead; for Elisha raised the widow's son, of whom it was expressly said "the child *was dead*;" 2 Kings 4: 32. Our Lord also raised several from the dead before his crucifixion.

Again, I remark: Our Lord was the first born from the dead "among many brethren." He gave assurance, John 5: 25, that "The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." That hour came when our Saviour hung on the cross and "cried with a LOUD VOICE—and gave up the ghost;" then "the rocks rent; and the *graves* were opened; and many bodies of the saints which *slept* arose, and came out of the graves *after* his resurrection," &c. This company, I apprehend, constitute the "*many brethren*," among whom Christ was "the first born from the dead," and are the "*first fruit*" with "Christ," and the pledge of the resurrection of *all* that sleep in Jesus "at his" *second 'coming'*.

Hence, we may understand the apostle, not as teaching that Christ was the first ever raised from the dead; but, as first, because the resurrection of all others depended upon him; and the first whose personal resurrection quickened others to life, even the "many brethren" of whom he speaks.

4. A brother writes me, saying — "The Saviour saith — Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." This, he supposes, disproves my idea of the *sleep* of the dead saints. But if that brother will look at that text with the context, I think he will see, *first* — that the subject of discourse was *the resurrection* of the saints, and not about an intermediate state. Look at the subject, John 11: 23, 26. "Jesus saith unto her, thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know he shall rise again in the *resurrection at the last day*." It seems she had no idea that he had *gone to heaven*. "Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead,

[when the resurrection of the last day comes] yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth [or is alive when that day comes] and believeth in me, shall *never die*—shall not die at all, but be "*changed*" in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.' See 1 Cor. 15: 51, 52.

Again, this brother says, "The Saviour, to convince the Sadducees of the certainty of the resurrection, declares that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were living."

We do not always pay that attention to the *subject* of discourse that we ought in interpreting the Scriptures. Let us look at this portion of the Bible. Luke 20: 27—38.—The Sadducees, who "deny that there is *any resurrection*," come to our Lord and present what they suppose to be a strong case. Our Saviour tells them, that "They that are accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead," &c., "*can die no more*." The expression denotes that they had *once* died. He adds—"Now that the dead are [to be] *raised*, even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not the God of the dead, [as he would be, if there is to be no resurrection] but of the living." *Therefore*, there will be a resurrection of the dead; or else Moses' language does not prove the resurrection of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is evident that there can be no force in the allusion to Moses, unless it was brought to prove the *resurrection* of the dead, and the allusion shows us that the life of those patriarchs depended upon such resurrection: and "God, who calleth things which be not as though they were," [see Rom. 4: 17] counted Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as living, because they shall *surely* come up in the resurrection to life eternal; and let us not "be ignorant, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a *thousand years as one day*;" so that the time from the death of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to their resurrection, is as no time with God. Now, if those patriarchs were *actually* then living, how does our Lord's appeal to Moses prove the resurrection? It might prove the existence of spirits, but not the *resurrection*, the very thing it was designed to prove.

But let us look at this case further. The Sadducees after stating the case add—"Therefore *in the resurrection* whose wife of them is she?" It seems there was no difficulty in their minds about the intermediate state, though the seven husbands and the wife had all gone into it. If our Lord had taught consciousness in the intermediate state, it seems most natural to suppose the Sadducees would have inquired: "*Whose wife is she now?*" for they are all alive." But they

pass over the intermediate state to the resurrection ; evidently, to my mind, because no such doctrine was held by the Jews, or our Lord, as the dead being *conscious* till the resurrection. The very idea is a palpable absurdity. The wages of sin, and the penalty of the law, is *death*. And that which introduces us into a state, in which, we “ know more than all the world,” as it is said, often, of a man when he dies, cannot be death, but a far superior life. I conclude, the Scripture testimony is true—“ *the dead know not any thing.*” If I am called an “ *infidel*” for that, be it so.

5. It is said — “ That the souls of the righteous have a sensible state of existence separate from the body, we learn from the circumstance of Paul’s being caught up to Paradise ; he says—‘ Whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell ; God knoweth.’ Now, if he had believed in the unconscious state of the dead, he would have supposed that he *must* have been in the body, and of course would have expressed no doubt on the subject.”

In reply, I might say—If Paul had believed in a conscious state after life had become extinct, and that the spirit of man exists separate from the body in a sensible state, “ he would have supposed that he *must* have been” *out of* the body, and of course would have expressed no doubts on the subject.” But his expression, I apprehend, only indicates that the revelation was made in such a manner as that *man* could not explain it.

6. It is said — “ That our Lord confirmed the belief that the spirit has a conscious state separate from the body, by saying to his disciples, after the resurrection, ‘ Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.’ ” The error here, I suppose, is in supposing that our Lord must have reference to the spirit of a *man*. Angels are spirits, but have not a body of “ flesh and bones ;” yet they have, doubtless, bodies in some form, though spiritual.

7. It is said — Rev. 6 : 9—11, proves the conscious being of the righteous before the resurrection — “ And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held : and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ? And white robes were given unto every one of them ; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”

Let me ask the objector—Had those souls any conscious being at the time John saw them and heard them cry ? So

far from it, they were not born, and had no being at all, only in the purpose of God, for several hundred years after John saw them. It was under the fifth seal, or bloody persecutions of papacy, that John viewed this scene. And the prophecy was evidently given for the comfort and encouragement of Christians that might be called to suffer under the papal power. That persecution would be long; and there would, hence, seem to be a disregard, on God's part, to the sufferings of the saints; and they are represented as crying, "how long," &c., and their feelings are clearly expressed by Isaiah, 49: 14,—“But Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.” But God causes it to be written for the comfort of his church, in that sorrowful age, that he regards all their sufferings, and will in due time avenge their blood. The Lord told Cain that—“The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground.” Does that prove that Abel's blood had a conscious being and a tongue to talk? The expressions denote no more than that God regards whatever his people suffer, and will avenge the injuries done to them, though he may seem to delay; and this is written for the comfort of the saints while passing through their trials. To suppose the feelings expressed, under the fifth seal, by the martyrs, were their feelings *after* they left this world, is to suppose they were *not happy*, if they were *conscious*; but in God's “presence there is fullness of joy;” and, therefore, the feelings expressed by the martyrs, if expressed in *words* at all, must have been *before* they left this world, and while yet in a state of suffering.

8. The case of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke 16, is supposed to form an insurmountable objection to the theory of the sleep of the dead. I admit there are difficulties in this text, but the difficulties are not so great to harmonize this with the unconscious state of the dead, previous to the resurrection, as to harmonize the common theory with the mass of Scripture testimony that the dead are asleep—that they “know not anything,” &c. We will now examine this case.

By parables as well as facts the Bible communicates instruction. In order to a right understanding of the speaker or writer, we should first inquire what was the object in view, or the instruction intended to be imparted. This we can only learn from the text, context, and comparing it with other portions of revelation.

There appear to have been several points intended to be impressed upon the people, by our Saviour, in the text now under consideration; and the instruction is the same whether it be considered a parable or history of facts.

"That this is only a parable," says Whitby, in his Commentary on this place, "and not a real history of what was done, is evident; (1.) Because we find this very parable in the *Germara Babylonicum*, whence it is cited by Mr. Sheringham, in the preface to his *Joma*. (2.) From the circumstances of it, viz., the rich man's *lifting up his eyes in hell*, and *seeing Lazarus in Abraham's bosom*—his discourse with Abraham—his complaint of being *tormented with flames*—and his desire that Lazarus might be sent to *cool his tongue*: if all this be confessedly *parable*, why should the rest, which is the very parable in the *Germara*, be accounted a history?" Lightfoot, also, remarks upon this subject—"Whoever believes this not a parable, but a true story, let him believe also those little friars, whose trade it is to show the monuments at Jerusalem to pilgrims, and point exactly to the place where the house of the 'rich glutton' stood." The outlines of this parable are found in a work, supposed to have been written while the Jews were in Babylon, or shortly after, called the "*Germara Babylonicum*." It was, most likely, founded on the *pagan* notion of the future state; and which some portion of the Jews imbibed. Their own Scriptures revealed no such doctrine. Their intercourse with the pagans, during their captivity, would naturally lead some of them to imbibe the notions of their masters.

If it be said, our Lord would not have used a story not founded in fact to convey instruction, but would have corrected the error: I answer, *First*, There is no evidence that the sentiments expressed in the "*Germara*" were adopted to any great extent among the Jews, though the Pharisees, to whom our Lord spoke, were doubtless familiar with the story. *Second*, There is no evidence that our Lord ever corrected, in positive language, the sentiment, prevalent, to some extent among the Jews, of the transmigration of souls, borrowed also from the pagans; and which even the disciples had imbibed, as appears from John 9:2, where they ask—"Who *did* sin, *this man* or his parents, that he was BORN blind?"

Those who oppose the unconscious state of the dead, maintain that "disembodied spirits" can talk, &c. Let me ask them one question:—Could Lazarus have come back and warned the rich man's brethren without being raised from the dead, or without a resurrection? If you answer, "*Yes*," I reply—It is evident from this very parable that he could not: for Abraham says, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one ROSE from the dead:" which shows, that if Lazarus did go to the

rich man's brethren he must have a resurrection from the dead to do so. Hence it is evident that "disembodied spirits" cannot *talk* and hold converse with men, and of course are not conscious; for angels can, and have appeared to men, and talked with them; and if dead men were conscious they *might* do the same without a resurrection: but Lazarus could not do it unless he "*rose from the dead*," our Lord being judge;—therefore, our Lord being judge, dead men are incapable of making communications to men; hence, this very discourse of our Saviour, instead of proving the consciousness of dead men, proves just the *reverse*.

The Greek word here translated *hell* is "*hades*," which, as Wakefield, I think, truly observes, "nowhere means *hell*—*gehenna*—in any author whatsoever, *sacred* or *profane*." It was not, therefore, "*beyond the grave*," *hades*—but *in the grave*. Hence, if it is a *matter-of-fact* case, the rich man, in his grave, could see, hear, and talk! And mark, our Saviour does not say his *spirit* did these things, but the *rich man himself*. Now he had expressly said "the rich man died and was buried [literally] *in the grave*." The Bible affirms, in plain and positive language, that there is *no knowledge* in the grave. See Ecc. 9 : 10. From the point then, where our Lord says, the rich man was buried in the grave, we have no authority to understand his language in any other light than as figurative; like "the voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground;" or "the *stone* shall cry out of the wall, and the *beam* out of the timber shall answer it." Hab. 2 : 11. And we might just as well pretend that a stone or beam are *conscious*, and can talk, as to contend from the case of the rich man that men are conscious, can see, hear, and talk when they are dead and in the grave: unless you can first prove, from some plain and positive testimony in the Bible, that the dead are really *not dead*. It is not unusual, in the Bible, to represent things without life as acting and talking. See Isa. 14 : 8. Prov. 8. Psal. 93 : 3. Judges 9 : 7—15. The Pharisees were continually crying amidst the miracles the Saviour wrought—"What sign showest thou? What dost thou work?" By a discourse in which our Lord shows the folly of trusting in riches, and of trusting in being *sons* of Abraham, he also preaches to them, that such was their hardness of heart, and obstinacy, that if one rose from the dead they would not believe. Our Saviour told them, on another occasion, John 5 : 46, 47, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" In his discourse on the rich man, he tells those

Pharisees — “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.” Let it be remembered, it was the Pharisees that our Lord was addressing, in the discourse on the rich man. See the 14th and 15th verses of the 16th chapter of Luke. “And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God.”

Again. If the case of the rich man is to be understood as “a matter of fact” case, he must be presented in the resurrection state; for he has a *tongue* that he wants cooled, and is tormented in a “*flame*.” Now, a “disembodied spirit” cannot be tormented in a *flame*, nor has it a tongue that can be cooled with “water.”

On this text Milton writes: “Christ, for the sake of the lesson to be conveyed, speaks of that as present which was not to take place till after the day of judgment, and describes the dead as placed in two distinct states,” but, “he by no means intimates any separation of the soul from the body.” — [*Treatise on Christian Doctrine*.]

9. It is said, Eccl. 12: 7, “The spirit shall return to God who gave it.” This text is supposed to form an objection to the doctrine of the sleep of the dead. But it is as true of the wicked as of the just, that their spirit returns to God. So we might prove universal salvation on the principle of the objector. Observe: the spirit *returns* to God who *gave* it. Let me ask, was it in a conscious state *before* it was given? If not, how can it be proved that it was in a conscious state *after* it returns? I do not see but we might as well argue, that because the body has feeling while we have life, it must have feeling after it “*returns* to dust.”

Solomon uses the term “spirit” in the 3d chapter 21st verse, to signify, the *life*. The term has various significations; one of which is, life, or breath. This returns to God, and by him is preserved until the resurrection, when the body is re-organized, and the breath, or spirit, re-enters it, and it stands up, once more, a “living soul.” The apostle Paul, it seems to me, clearly makes our entire future existence to depend on the resurrection; for, he tells us, if the dead rise not, “then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*.” They are not perished if they have conscious being, even though the body were never raised.

Ezekiel, 37th chapter, sets this subject in a clear light. After the bones had come together, the sinews and flesh

come upon them, and the skin covered them, he then prophesied, saying, come from the four winds, O *breath*, and breathe upon these slain, that they live—and the breath came into them and they *lived*." Nothing is here said about their *souls* coming from heaven; but the *breath* came and they lived. That breath had returned to God, at death, as "the dust returned to dust;" but was no more in a conscious state than the mouldering body, till the resurrection; then the entire man *awakes*, and "lives again."

10. A brother, who opposes my views, refers to 1 Thess. 4: 13, 14. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if ye believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." On this text the brother says: "He will not bring their *bodies*, for they are already here and will arise to meet him, instead of being brought down with him. It must be some *part* of the dead which God will bring with him. What part it is, which will come then, it is not hard to determine:" *i. e.* their *souls*.

Let us analyze the text, and see if it does not teach the doctrine I advocate. What is the doctrine contained in it? *First*: The dead "are *asleep*." *Second*: They are not to sleep always—for, they shall have a *resurrection*, just as certain as that Christ was raised. *Third*: The proof of it is this: "Jesus died and *rose* again"—"God BROUGHT again *from the dead* our Lord Jesus Christ," (See Heb. 13: 20,) "*even so* them also which sleep in Jesus will God *bring* with him:" not from heaven, but "from the dead." Not a word does Paul say of their "being brought down with him." No. God *brought* Christ *from the dead*; that is the apostles' argument; therefore those that sleep in Jesus, God will *also* bring from the dead; and of this *fact* "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, that ye sorrow not as others which have no hope" of a resurrection. The apostle, in the verses following, goes on to tell the time *when* the resurrection of them that sleep in Jesus will take place; viz: at the coming of the Lord; but says not one word about the Lord bringing their "*souls*" from heaven.

If it be said, The expression, "bring with him," makes it necessary to understand it as something done at the *same time*, I answer, the same apostle says, Eph. 2: 5, God "hath quickened us together *with* Christ." Does that imply that Paul was quickened at the "*same time*" that Christ rose from the dead? Surely he was a bloody persecutor some years after that. "*With him*," then, signifies no more

than the certainty of the event. As God *brought* Christ, the head, from the dead, so the Church, which is Christ's body, God will bring *with* him. They will not remain under the power of death seeing God brought up their head. But "If Christ be not raised, then they that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." See 1 Cor. 15: 17, 18.

I will now give my own opinion in regard to the doctrine of an intermediate state of conscious being, between death and the resurrection. I believe it to be a Papal corruption of the word of God. Papacy commenced pardoning living men's sin, but could not make money fast enough that way, and so conjured up an intermediate state, in which they manufactured their "Purgatory, Limbus Infantum, Limbus patrum," &c. Then the people must pay money to the priest to baptize their children, to keep their souls out of "Limbus Infantum," or that purgatory where they were taught "all the souls of *unbaptized* children would go, until original sin is well paid away by the help of holy masses said for them." "Money, money, MONEY," now the priest could cry, and cry it too to his entire satisfaction; for he had manufactured his *invisible* conscious state, which the blind people could not see, and so the priest must be paid to his heart's content, or the souls of children and departed friends would be retained in purgatory; and thus a fine field is open to gratify the avarice of a corrupt priesthood. And then, such a state of consciousness was necessary, into which to put departed saints, in order to make intercessors of them, and thus open another fruitful field to accumulate money and make the ignorant people wonder. Thus the way was fully opened for any superstition that the "Man of Sin" chose to practise. And how, I pray, can you prove to a Papist that it is unavailing for him to ask help of departed saints? You cannot but admit it was right while these saints were upon earth, to ask their prayers; and if, after death, they are in a conscious state, and in the presence of God, have they not as much power with God as while on earth? And if so, why may we not ask their intercession now as while here? How shall a Papist be answered? Surely, the only Scriptural answer seems to be, — the saints who have died are "*asleep*" — and "*the dead know not anything.*" Therefore it is as useless to ask their intercession, as it is to ask that of a block, or a stone; and is no better than asking the help of any other idol of wood or stone."

It is true, that the Papists should not be taxed as the original propagators of the doctrine of souls living after the body is dead; they only brought the theory to perfection.

It grew up, as Milton truly intimates, "in the schools of" heathen "philosophy." But on that point I may say more hereafter. Wherever it originated its fruit has been "evil, and only evil, and that continually." It has given birth to all the Papal worshipping of saints, with all the superstitions connected therewith; it has turned off the eyes of Christians from the hope of the gospel, viz: the personal revelation of the Lord from heaven, so that the second coming of our blessed Lord has almost ceased to be an object of desire or expectation; and the Christian hope, to a great extent, has been changed to an expectation of death, the king of terrors, instead of looking for our Lord, the king of peace, from heaven to "change our vile bodies." It has led thinking men into infidelity, and it has led, and is leading ministers and members of the churches into a denial of the resurrection of the body. And why should they not deny it? If the saints are in a conscious state after death, and of course perfectly happy, for what, I pray, do they want to come back after their bodies, which have been turned to corruption? If it is answered, "To *perfect* their happiness,"—I reply, "In thy presence is *fulness* of joy." Ps. 16: 11. What *more* can the saints have than "fulness of joy?" If they go in their disembodied state into the presence of God, and are perfectly happy, it would seem, it must be a repulsive idea to think of ever again entering a body which was, while in it, a source of trouble, and caused them to "groan."

How could Paul say, 1 Cor. 15, "If the dead rise not, then they that have *fallen asleep* in Christ are *perished*?" if the saints go into a conscious state of blessedness the moment they die? If it be said, Paul means their bodies are perished, I reply, one would think that was no great cause of regret, if their souls are perfectly happy without their bodies. It seems to me, that Paul intended to teach—that our entire future existence depends on a resurrection from the dead; and if there be no resurrection, then, at death, man *ceases to have existence*, and will live no more for ever.

This intermediate conscious state, I apprehend, is what has entirely hid the glory of the resurrection from the minds of men, and led many ministers and others to deny that there is any resurrection of the body; and I should not think strange, if the world does not come to an end soon, if the churches, so called, should deny altogether, that there is any resurrection of the dead; or take the ground that "the resurrection is past, already;" that is, say, "a man receives his resurrection body when he dies, and never returns for the body he put off at death;" thus "overthrowing the faith of some." See 2 Tim. 2: 18.

THE STATE OF THE DEAD.—No. 2.

“TO DIE IS GAIN.”—PHIL. 1:21.

The above expression is *one* of the main pillars, if not *the* main one, that is relied upon to disprove the doctrine that “*the dead know not anything*.” I shall now suggest an interpretation of this phrase, differing from any of my previous thoughts.

Begin at the 12th verse of the 1st chap. Phil. “I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which have happened unto me have fallen out rather *unto the FURTHERANCE of the gospel*; so that MY BONDS in [margin—“for’] *Christ are manifest* in all the palace, [Cæsar’s court] and in all other places. And many of the brethren in the Lord, *waxing confident by my bonds*, are MUCH MORE BOLD to speak the word *without fear*. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some of good will. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add *affliction to my bonds*; but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, CHRIST *is preached*; and I therein rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and my hope, and that *in nothing I shall be ashamed*, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, *Christ shall be MAGNIFIED* in my body, *whether by LIFE OR DEATH*. For to me to live, is Christ, [is to “*magnify*” Christ,] and “to die is gain,” to Christ and his gospel; as *hitherto* “the things which have happened unto me have fallen out unto the *furtherance of the gospel*,” so I shall “*magnify*” Christ still, even if I “die” for him.”

In the previous verses the apostle had declared that all which had befallen him hitherto had only tended to *further the gospel*; and at the 20th verse, he expresses his strong confidence that still, “Christ shall be magnified” in him, “whether it be by life, or by death.” Thus he expresses his purpose to *magnify* his Master at all events—whether it was by living to labour and suffer for Christ, or by dying for his cause: either way he was determined Christ should be *magnified*. In the next verse he expresses the same confi-

dence, that *whichever* it should be, that such would be the result—his Lord would get glory to himself: hence he says, “For to me to live is Christ,” [to *magnify* Christ] “and to die is gain.”—“Gain” for whom? I answer, *for Christ*; for, thereby Christ will be magnified even more than by my life, or he will not suffer me to die; for he has the keys of death; and so long as he sees he can be more magnified by my life than by my death, so long my life will be continued; but when he sees that it would be “*gain*” to his cause for me to die, a martyr, then I shall magnify him by death. “But if I live in the flesh, [a corruptible state] this is the fruit of my labour,” [what is the fruit of his labour? suffering and pain] “yet what I shall choose I wot [know] not. For I am in a strait betwixt two,” [“betwixt two” what? Do you say, whether to *live or die*? I think not, but] “having a desire to depart and be with Christ; which is far better,” than either to live in the flesh *or die*. The contrast, I apprehend, was not between life or death, but between *life and death* on the one hand, and *being with Christ* on the other. If he could have his choice, he would desire that “mortality might be swallowed up of life,” when he should “be with Christ,” in preference to living in this corruptible state, or dying. It was in other words, “*immortality*,” that Paul desired—a perfect deliverance from corruption and death both: knowing that when he “who is our life shall *appear, then*” he should “appear with him in glory.” Hence he was looking for the Lord Jesus from heaven, to *change his vile body*, as he says in the third chapter of the same Epistle. And he further says, that at present, while in this corruptible state, he labours and suffers—“*If by any means* I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” This shows that Paul was looking not to death for deliverance, or to be with Christ, but to the resurrection, or a *change* of the vile body, which would be equivalent.

I think the meaning of the 21st verse is expressed in the above paraphrase, and is, as if the apostle had said—

“If I live I shall magnify Christ; and if I die Christ shall *gain* still greater glory in me, or by me.” It expresses the perfect confidence Paul had in leaving himself entirely in the hand of his Lord and Saviour:—whatever befell him, Christ would be *magnified*, “whether by life or death;” and such was his entire devotion and consecration to his Redeemer, that he should be perfectly satisfied, whether it was ordered that he should die or live, and he knew not which to choose; but he had a *desire* to depart from this corruptible state, or have his vile body changed, and be *with Christ* which was far better than *either to live here or die*.

THE STATE OF THE DEAD. — No. 3.

"*Gehenna*," the Greek word translated "*Hell*," and used in the New Testament in relation to the punishment of the wicked, a learned author says, "Does not occur in the Septuagint Greek of the Old Testament, nor in any classic author in the world. The term does not occur in any letter or communication to the Gentiles. It was understood by the Jews and employed *only* in discourses with them. It occurs 12 times in the New Testament: 7 times in Matt.; 3 times in Mark; once in Luke; and once in James. Three of these the term appears to be used figuratively; viz., Matt. 5:22; 23:15; and James 3:6."

The places where this word occurs are Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33. Mark 9:43, 45, 47. Luke 12:5. James 3:6.

"*Hades*," is a Greek word which occurs *eleven* times in the New Testament, and is *ten* times translated "*hell*," and *once* "*grave*," viz., 1 Cor. 15:55. It is found in the following texts, viz., Matt. 11:23; 16:18. Luke 10:15; 16:23. Acts 2:31, 27. Rev. 1:18; 20:13, 14.

The Hebrew word "*Sheol*," of the same import as *hades*, used in the Old Testament, is translated "*hell*" 31 times. It never signifies a place of torment. How would it sound in the mouth of Jacob to translate "*Sheol*," "*hell*?" See Gen. 37:35. "I will go down into *hell* [*Sheol*] unto my son mourning." Was Joseph, if dead, in a place of torment? And was Jacob so unreconciled that he wished to go into that place of torment also? Our translators saw the absurdity of such a translation, and rendered it "*grave*;" a perfectly correct translation.

Dr. Campbell says:—"Before the Captivity, and the Macedonian and Roman conquests, the Jews observed the most *profound silence* upon the state of the dead, as to their happiness or misery. They spoke of it simply as a state of silence, darkness, and inactivity. But after the Hebrews mingled with the Greeks and Romans they *insensibly* slid into their use of terms, and *adopted* some of *their ideas* on such subjects as those on which *THEIR oracles were silent*. Even Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, adopts their word '*tartarus*.' 2 Pet. 2:4. In the original it is neither *Gehenna* nor *Hades*, but *Tartarus*." Peter was writing to *converted Gentiles*. That accounts for his using that term. Dr. Campbell says:—"The gates of *hades* [the grave] is a very natural periphrasis for death." He adds—"We have sufficient evidence, sacred and profane, that this is its meaning."

"*Tartarus*" signifies, rather, a place of imprisonment.

From the foregoing facts, several thoughts arise:—

First. There is no evidence in the Old Testament of any *conscious existence* between death and the resurrection. God made no revelation to the posterity of Jacob of any such doctrine.

Second. The doctrine of the intermediate conscious state of the dead is a *pagan fable*, derived from the Greeks and Romans.

Third. The Old Testament teaches that the dead are silent, inactive, and without knowledge. "*In Sheol there is no knowledge.*" Ecc. 9: 10.

Fourth. "*Gehenna*," the term sometimes employed in the New Testament in speaking of the punishment of the wicked, was used *only* in discourses with the Jews, who were perfectly familiar with its meaning, and could not well understand it in any other sense than that of utter destruction. The word is derived from "*Ge*"—*valley*—and "*Hinnom*," the name of a man. Divines studiously keep the true reference of the term "*hell fire*"—"gehenna"—out of sight. Says THE POLYMICRIAN GREEK LEXICON to the NEW TESTAMENT, "*Gehenna*, properly the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem; once celebrated for the horrid worship of Moloch, and afterwards polluted with every species of filth, as well as the carcasses of animals, and dead bodies of malefactors; to consume which, in order to avert the pestilence which such a mass of corruption would occasion, constant fires were kept burning."

The incorrigible sinner, like the filth about Jerusalem, and the dead bodies of malefactors, if not utterly consumed, would keep alive the plague in the universe; hence, they shall be "*cast into Gehenna—hell-fire.*" *Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna*"—hell. Mat. 10: 28.

Lastly. The glorious thought is presented, that though the "*gates of hades*"—*the grave*—for a time close their iron folds, and seem to say, we shall hold fast the sleeping church, yet our blessed Lord declares that power shall be broken—that "*the gates of the grave shall not prevail against it.*" A cheering thought truly. Some have slumbered long under the power of the grave, but Jesus will shortly descend from heaven with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God—then burst ye gates of "*hades*"—*the grave*—you can hold your victims no longer—your iron folds and bars become like the flaxen cords on Sampson's arms that were as though burnt with fire. Triumphant, then, shall a redeemed Church stand up, made like her glorious head, to die no more. Blessed day—may it soon arrive. "*Come Lord Jesus.*"

THE STATE OF THE DEAD. — No. 4.

Eccl. 12:7, has often been quoted in proof that there is in man a spirit that remains conscious when he is dead—"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit [*"breath," "life,"* for so the original word signifies] shall return to God who gave it." This is as true of the wicked man as of the good; and it just as truly proves universal salvation as it proves that a man is *alive* when he is dead. But until it can be proved that this spirit, whatever it is, had consciousness *before* God gave it to man, it never can be proved, from this text, that it has consciousness *after* it returns whence it came. The natural inference is, that the spirit returns to the same state that it was before man had consciousness. Every man knows he had no consciousness prior to his present organization, yet his spirit—life, breath—came from God and returns to God, as his body came from the ground and returns to the earth: and there is nothing in this text that can prove that that which returns to God has consciousness any more than the body has feeling when it returns to the earth. But to settle that point, the same writer, in the 9th chap. 5th verse, *positively* declares that, "*the dead know not anything;*" and a mere *inference* drawn from the language of a writer, must fall before a *positive* declaration of the same writer that the inference is *false*.

If the doctrine of an immediate entrance into conscious delight, at death, is taught in the Old Testament, why did men of God deprecate death? Let us note two or three examples. Isa. 38:1—5. "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, and said, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done *that which is good* in thy sight: and Hezekiah wept sore. Then came the word of the Lord to Isaiah, saying, Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years." After his recovery he praises God for his mercy. He says, "Thou hast in love to my soul *delivered it* from the pit of corruption: the grave cannot praise thee; death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I *do* this day." This case shows that

if the doctrine of conscious enjoyment, when men are dead is true, Hezekiah did not understand it.

David says, Psalms 6: 5—"For in death *there* is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" Psalm 88: 10-12. "Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise *and* praise thee? Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?" Psalm 115: 17. "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." The expressions show David's view of the state of the dead. Could he have said these things had he believed that "the dead know more than all the world?" He says, Psalm 17: 15, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I *awake*, with thy likeness;" *not before*. Hence, he could not have believed that he should immediately enter into the presence of God; because he says, Psalm 16: 11, "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore." If Christians enter at death into the presence of God, in conscious enjoyment, then David is represented as looking to the Resurrection for satisfaction, and yet as declaring there was *fulness of joy* before: in other words, he could be in the presence of God, where there is fulness of joy, and *not be satisfied*. So far as David is concerned, Peter settles that point, Acts 2: 34; "For David is not ascended into the heavens." Where is David? Acts 2: 29, "The Patriarch David is *both dead and buried*." When he awakes, as he will "at the last day," with all the saints, then he will "*be satisfied*."

We will now look more directly at the Old Testament doctrine on this subject. Let us begin with man's creation, Gen. 2: 7: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." To this *living soul* God said, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Or, "dying thou shalt die," as the Hebrew has it. Now look at Psalm 146: 4; "His breath goeth forth, [that is, what his Maker breathed into him] he returneth to his earth; [there goes his body] in that very day his *thoughts* perish." What is there left of him? Job says, chap. 14: 10-12, "But man dieth and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where *is* he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: So man lieth down and riseth not: till the heavens *be* no more, they shall not awake nor be raised out of their sleep."

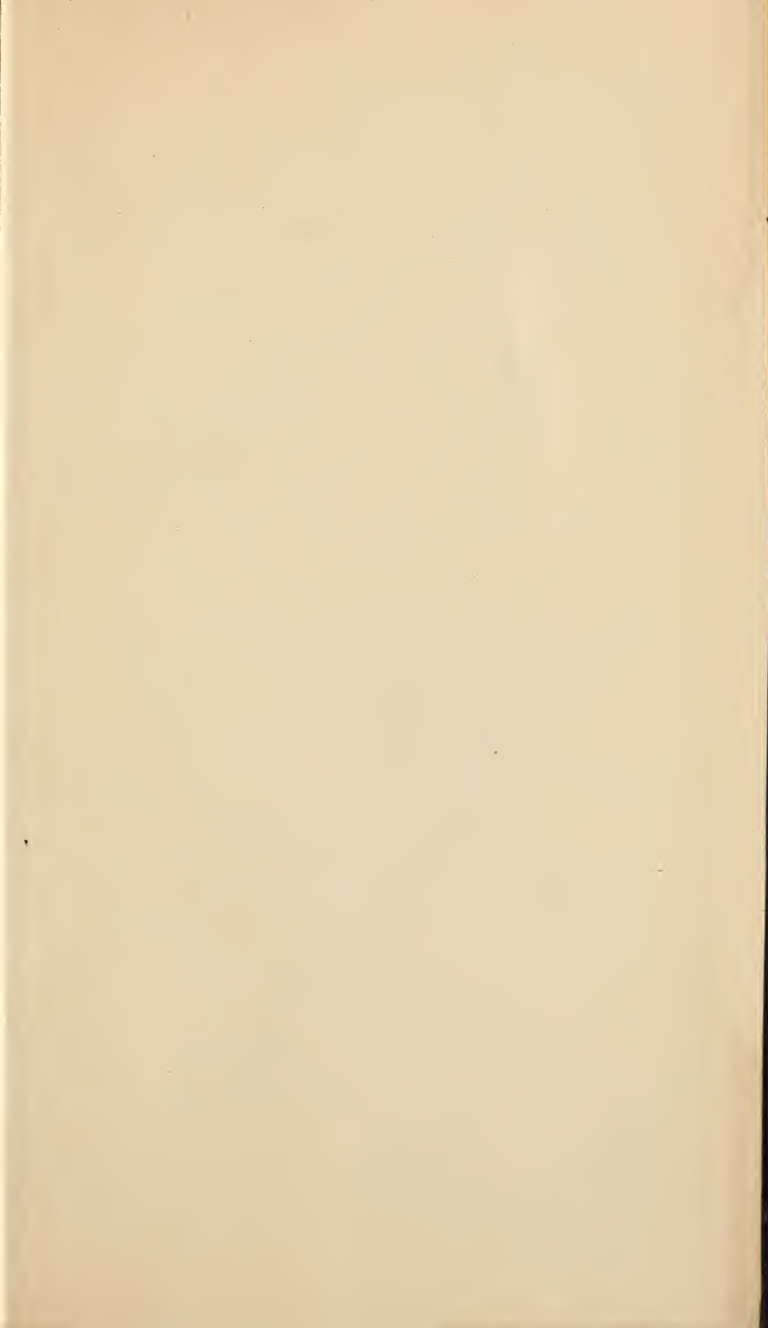
THE WICKED NOT IMMORTAL.

PAIN AND PUNISHMENT NOT INSEPARABLE.

What is the Scripture argument that the righteous and the wicked are not equally immortal? The Bible expressly declares that the righteous put on "*immortality*"—that they have "*eternal life*," and it as expressly declares that Christ will "burn up the wicked;" yea, that the Lord of Hosts "shall burn them up," so that they shall be left "neither root nor branch,"—that they shall *die*—be destroyed for ever—perish—utterly perish, &c.

The notion that *pain* and punishment are inseparable is erroneous. If pain were essential, in order to constitute punishment, then our laws inflict the lightest punishment, or penalty, on the greatest offenders. But our civil laws are based on the principle that life is a blessing, and the deprivation of that life, an evil, loss, penalty or punishment. If the deprivation of life, which is a blessing, is a punishment, then an eternal deprivation of it will be an eternal punishment. But some think that people cannot be punished unless they are *conscious* of the fact, but the laws of the land do not so regard punishment, or death would be only a momentary punishment, for the law does not look into the future. Besides, you may take a being whose life is the most wretched imaginable, and yet the law would regard the deprivation of that miserable life, even if the individual were a Christian, as the highest penalty it can inflict. It is the deprivation of the life itself—not the pain inflicted, or the pain which God may inflict after death, to which the law looks. Hence the deprivation of a blessing, whether the individual remains sensible of it or not, is punishment, and if that deprivation is eternal, *the punishment is eternal*. If Gabriel were to transgress, and to be instantly, *without a single pang*, blotted eternally out of existence, would it not be to him an ETERNAL PUNISHMENT?





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